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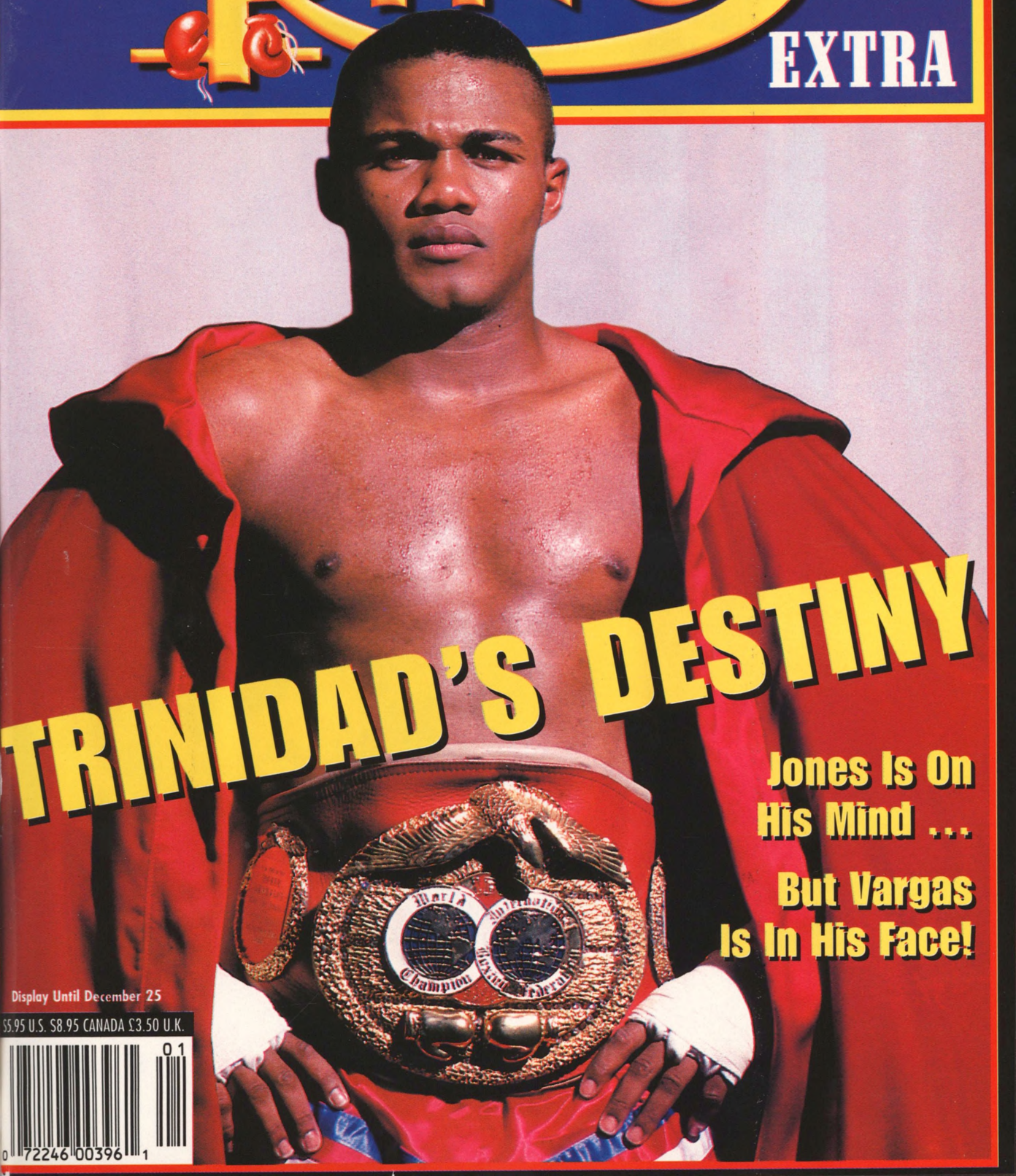

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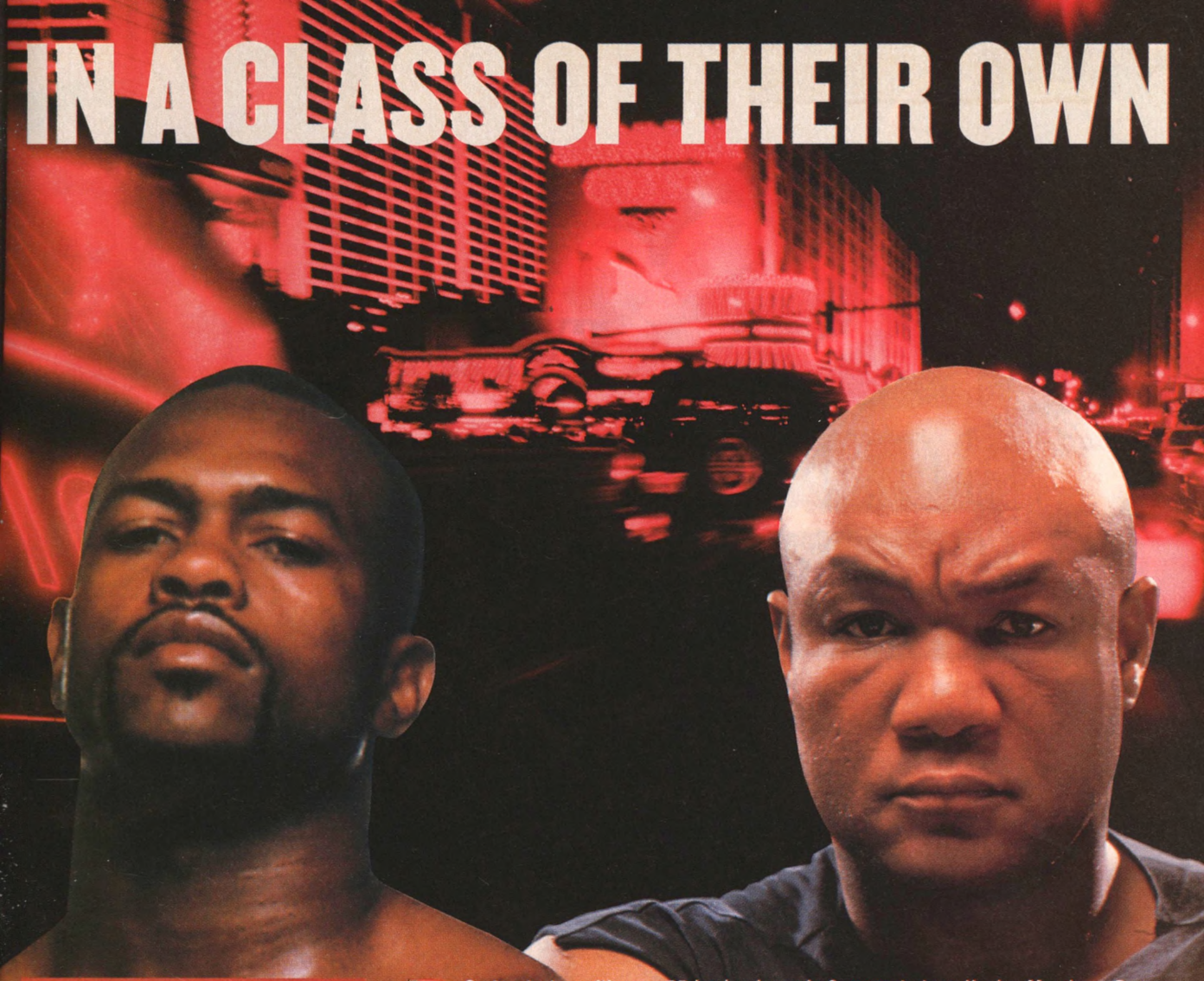

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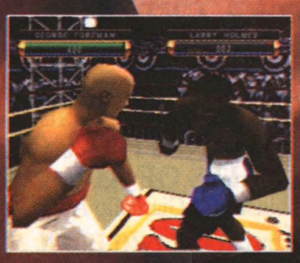

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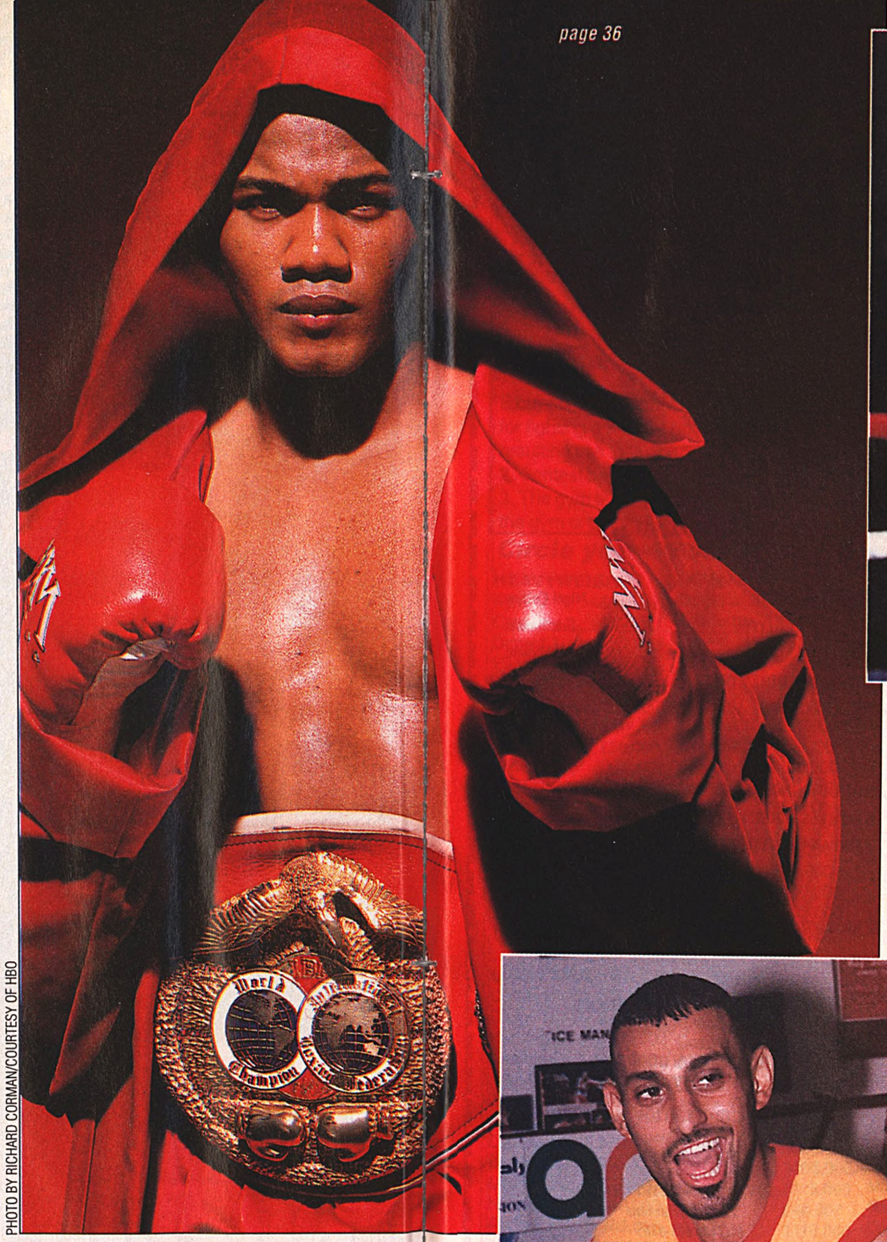
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PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

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# RINGSIDE

Last month in the debut of the full-color version of THE RING, I promised "even greater improvements" in future issues. This month I'm pleased to present many of those improvements in the first-ever edition of THE RING EXTRA, a massive, 108-page full-color magazine that will be published on alternating months with the regular RING.

The RING EXTRA is in no way a radical departure from the magazine loyal readers have been supporting for the past 78 years; all the familiar features and departments that have made THE RING the undisputed champion of boxing magazines are intact. THE RING EXTRA is an expansion of our boxing coverage in a number of exciting new ways.

Among the innovations are "Digging Deep" *(page 24)*, an insightful and irreverent column from West Coast correspondent Ivan Goldman, "The A, B, C, And Deas Of Boxing" *(page 28)*, an instructional column by writer/trainer Tommy Deas, and "Being There" *(page 26)*, a roving field guide to various sites and functions that make up boxing's diverse panorama.

We will continue to fine-tune both THE RING and THE RING EXTRA in the coming months, upholding the Sweet Science's honored traditions while keeping fully abreast of the sport's exhilarating, hi-tech journey into the 21st century.

***

While the ramifications of the IBF racketeering trial, verdict, and aftermath are given comprehensive coverage in Kevin Iole's feature, "Bob Lee (Almost) Not Guilty: IBF Trial Ends In Split Decision" *(page 32)* and in Goldman's perceptive "Digging Deep," I couldn't let such a consequential legal ruling pass without comment.

I concur with those who believe that the feds made a major mistake by not putting a human face on the alleged crimes Lee was acquitted of committing. Rather than depend on a highly unsympathetic parade of prosecution witnesses, the government could have made a much greater impact on the jury by having far more fighters testify. To the best of my knowledge, former IBF light heavyweight champion William Guthrie was the only fighter the prosecution called to the stand.

As "Digging Deep" denotes, juries don't always decide guilt or innocence based purely on the facts. Their life experiences and the personalities of the individuals involved in the trial come into play. True, testimony from an array of fighters who have been screwed by the IBF might not necessarily have proved that any particular crimes had been committed, but they would have been able to give the jury a greater understanding of how detrimental the alphabet organization has been to both the fighters and the sport. Armed with that awareness, the jury just might have arrived at an entirely different verdict.

***

THE RING has always been one of Evander Holyfield's biggest boosters. He has been selected as the magazine's Fighter of the Year on three occasions, and for most of his storied career, has repaid our support by being everything a fighter should be. But recent events inside and out of the ring are beginning to sully his legend, and I agree with almost everything Ted Bodenrader writes in his heartfelt piece, "Dear Evander, Get Out!" *(page 54)*. Like most fans, I like to keep my heroes on a pedestal, but "The Real Deal" is teetering on the brink of falling off of his.

**Nigel Collins**
**Editor-in-Chief**


**Volume 80, No. 1** **January 2001**

The RING

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## IOLE NEEDS AN EYE

Kevin Iole's decision to rate Richard Steele number one ("The 10 Best Referees In The Game," October 2000) leads me to believe that he must be half-blind, paid off, or delusional.

Steele's performance most times parallels many of the ridiculous scorecards that boxing judges turn in. His so-called safety-first attitude is nothing more than a cover for his incompetence, as exemplified in the Julio Cesar Chavez-Meldrick Taylor fight. Did you expect him to admit that he made a huge judgmental mistake? Steele's over-cautiousness ruined a great fight that the fans paid good money to see. And, moreover, he decided the winner.

DR. EDWARD MARTIN
Asheville, NC

## HARD TIMES FOR HAMED

Eric Raskin must be congratulated on his foresight. He correctly predicted in the October 2000 "Looking Ahead" column the outcome of the August 19 HBO card: an excellent matchup between Micky Ward and Antonio Diaz, and a blowout win for Prince Naseem Hamed. What Raskin did not foresee was that against a third-rate fighter like Augie Sanchez, The Prince would hit the canvas and end up bloodied and bruised.

In the past five years, with or without Emanuel Steward, Naseem has learned nothing. He still carries his chin high, his hands low, and his feet off the ground. He will be a heck of a mess if and when he faces a top opponent at 126, 130, or higher (everyone knows his fighting weight is at least 135 pounds). And he'd better elevate the caliber of his opposition soon. Otherwise, he will become irrelevant, like Butterbean. People will tire of watching his circus act, just to see him demolish another outweighed, outmatched victim.

BRUNO MASILHA
Pawtucket, RI

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*Richard Steele, shown officiating the Oscar De La Hoya-Oba Carr welterweight title bout in 1999, is far from the best referee in the game, according to reader Dr. Edward Martin. Martin says Steele's safety-first attitude is nothing more than a cover for his incompetence.*

## IS TAPIA RUNNING?

I have been wanting to get this off my chest for several years: Johnny Tapia has made a career hiding from both Tim Austin and Mark Johnson.

I am sick and tired of hearing Tapia always running his mouth about how he has "fought the very best there was to fight." Balderdash! Both Austin and Johnson have openly called Tapia out on several occasions. He simply wants no

part of either of them, and with good reason. He would get his butt soundly beaten by both of them!

Come on, Johnny, quit dodging from the real best, and show the boxing world your courage. But I'm not holding my breath for that to ever happen.

LOU L. EAGLER
Riverside, CA

## HOLYFIELD-RUIZ REACTIONS

In the aftermath of the Evander Holyfield-John Ruiz WBA heavyweight championship farce, I'm sure THE RING has been swamped with letters. Although this fight represented everything wrong with boxing today, my biggest problem was having to listen to Ruiz whine about the decision. Yes, John, you won the fight, but the rules were simple: You had to win by kayo to walk out of that ring with the belt.

You were handpicked by Don King to be the number-one ranked contender to insure that Holyfield would grab a slice of the heavyweight title. No other legitimate boxing or sports publication had you ranked in the top 10 in the world. Instead of questioning the judges, Mr. Ruiz, you may want to question how it was that you were ranked ahead of David Tua, the guy who starched you in 19 seconds.

MARK R. SAVAGE
Winfield, IL

That does it! I quit being a boxing fan! After hearing the abominable decision in the Holyfield-Ruiz bout, which was actually a good fight, I am left with a taste of disgust for the sport. Each time fighters step into the ring, they risk their very lives for a shot at glory and/or history. Ruiz, a 4-1 underdog facing a three-time former world champion, had tremendous courage to lay down his chips and lace up his gloves for this immense challenge. To everyone's surprise, he pounded an ineffective Holyfield and won by perhaps a wider margin than Lennox Lewis did in both of his fights with Holyfield!

Alas, the reward was never intended to be his. Boxing is a dichotomy of guts and strategy—Ruiz had both, yet he could never beat the cheating and strategy played outside the ropes. He risked everything for nothing, like a soldier marching into a losing battle. I myself feel like an accomplice for watching and supporting this travesty. And by the way, Evander, in case nobody told you, you are no longer a national hero. Please, show some integrity and admit you lost that night!

RICK PADRO
West Haven, CT

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/ALLSPORT

***Evander Holyfield should face the reality that he is no longer a top-notch heavyweight and did not deserve to win the WBA title in his bout with John Ruiz, says reader Rick Padro.***

## FLETCHER DESERVES A RETRIAL

Although I'm not sure if I'm for or against capital punishment, I'm sure about one thing: Capital punishment should definitely not apply if the crime can't be proven without any doubt. That is why I was quite disturbed by the article in the August 2000 issue of THE RING, "Does Anthony Fletcher Deserve to Die?" If the information provided is correct, I can't understand how Fletcher was convicted of first-degree murder. An ex-soldier would not shoot a person in the side or the leg if he intended to kill him. He would aim for more vital organs.

My main question is this: How did the police prove that the murder weapon was in Fletcher's possession before he was confronted by Vaughn Christopher? Did they prove this beyond a shadow of a doubt? If not, then this is, in my opinion, a reasonable doubt against murder in the first degree, and therefore a reason for a retrial.

Another reason for a retrial is the fact that there could be evidence that was not considered at the trial. The article said that Fletcher's clothing was not checked for gunpowder or any other signs of a struggle that could prove the truth of Fletcher's version of events that took place.

All things considered, I get the feeling that this trial was more a popularity contest than anything else. The remarks by the prosecutor that Fletcher was always called "Two Guns" because he carried two guns is one reason for this impression.

Still, I believe Fletcher committed a serious crime and should therefore be imprisoned. Even if he acted in self-defense, he should have gotten help for the injured Christopher. But there is a difference between first-degree murder and third-degree murder, or manslaughter. Therefore, I hope Fletcher's case is retried.

PHILIPP KRUCK
Marl, Germany ■

# ROUND ONE

## MITCH HALPERN, 1967-2000

Mitch Halpern, who had become one of the sport's finest referees, died at his Las Vegas home on August 20 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to Las Vegas police. Police would not say if Halpern, 33, had left a suicide note or whether they knew the reason he took his own life.

"It was an obvious suicide," Homicide Lieutenant Wayne Peterson said.

Halpern had refereed more than 50 world championship fights, including some of the biggest in recent years. He was the third man in the ring for Evander Holyfield's stunning upset of Mike Tyson in 1996, as well as for Oscar De La Hoya-Ike Quartey, De La Hoya-Felix Trinidad, and Holyfield-Lennox Lewis II.

Halpern was trained to be a referee by veteran ref Richard Steele, who called Halpern "my son." Steele said many people approach him about becoming a referee, but said Halpern was one of the few who followed through on his commitment and went to the gym to learn.

*Halpern looks in during Holyfield-Tyson I*

"I taught him everything I knew," Steele said. "He took what I had taught him, and with his great natural ability, made himself a great referee."

Halpern was one of the most dedicated officials in the sport, Steele said. Even though he had become widely recognized as one of the game's top referees, he still made regular trips to the gym in Las Vegas to work sparring sessions in an effort to improve.

Outside of boxing, Halpern was the director of corporate direct mail for Station Casinos. Halpern is survived by a daughter, Maris, 4, from a marriage that ended last year. Speculation as to why Halpern chose to end his life included talk of a fight with his fiancee, who is pregnant with his second child. Halpern also recently learned that his mother has breast cancer. Those close to Halpern have said they doubt the suicide could be related to the fact that Halpern was the third man in the May '95 Gabriel Ruelas-Jimmy Garcia fight, in which Garcia was killed in the ring.

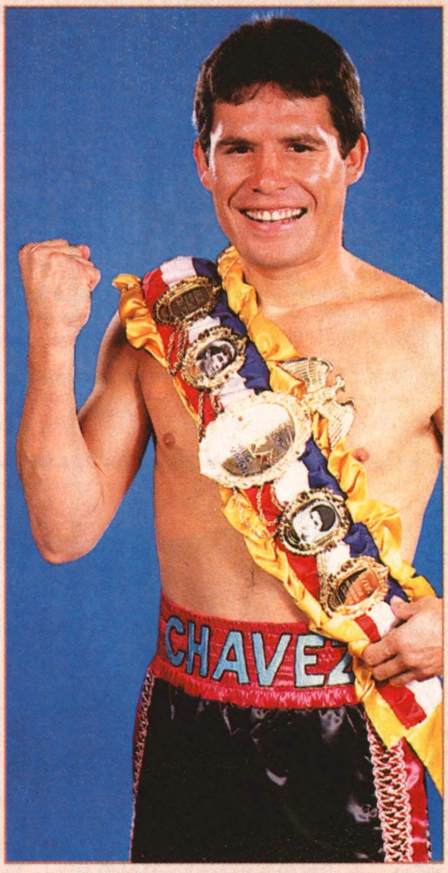
In his last major fight, Halpern disqualified Rosendo Alvarez for low blows in a world light flyweight title bout with Bebis Mendoza on August 11. Halpern was scheduled to work the Fernando Vargas-Ross Thompson IBF junior middleweight title fight on August 26 at Mandalay Bay, and was replaced by veteran official Joe Cortez. As Cortez was giving the fighters the final instructions in the ring, he said, "This is for you, Mitch. We love you and we miss you."

**—Kevin Iole**

## THE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUNDS

*While we're all very thankful that Julio Cesar Chavez' fight with Kostya Tszyu was stopped when it was, from a historical perspective, the Mexican legend could have benefited from a less concerned referee. If Chavez never fights again, as he insists will be the case, the man who engaged in more world title fights than anyone in history will finish his career just one round shy of third place on the all-time list of most title rounds fought. Here are the top 10 in that category. [Note: Former light heavyweight champion Virgil Hill had fought 258 title rounds as of our press deadline, and was scheduled to have challenged Fabrice Tiozzo for the WBA cruiserweight belt by the time you read this.]*

| FIGHTER | TITLE ROUNDS | TITLE FIGHTS | ROUNDS PER TITLE FIGHT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Emile Griffith | 339 | 24 | 14.1 |
| Abe Attell | 337 | 26 | 13.0 |
| Hilario Zapata | 303 | 24 | 12.6 |
| Julio Cesar Chavez | 302 | 37 | 8.2 |
| Sugar Ray Robinson | 288 | 25 | 11.5 |
| Muhammad Ali | 270 | 25 | 10.8 |
| Miguel Canto | 266 | 18 | 14.8 |
| Eusebio Pedroza | 266 | 22 | 12.1 |
| Larry Holmes | 265 | 25 | 10.6 |
| Manuel Ortiz | 260 | 23 | 11.3 |




*Chavez: Retiring (we hope) at number four*

## BOMBS AWAY!

Fans who enjoy watching crushing powershots and bodies crashing to the canvas in rapid-fire succession will love BFS Entertainment's new video release *The Perfect Punch* ($14.98 for VHS; $19.98 for DVD), which delivers on its promise of more than "100 sensational knockouts in a space of 90 minutes."

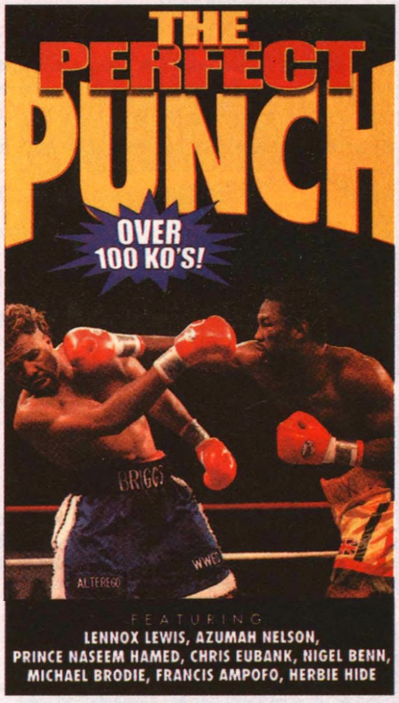
While current superstars Lennox Lewis and Naseem Hamed (seen bowling over early opponents) are among the dozens of fighters featured, most of the footage is of guys whose careers petered out in the mid-1990s—Chris Eubank, Nigel Benn, Azumah Nelson—and a horde of British fighters who may not be familiar to most American enthusiasts.

The video is hosted by Barry Hearn, who promoted all of the fights shown. Hearn sounds somewhat chagrined to be presiding over such a savage smorgasbord, but after advising viewers to "look beyond the knockout and appreciate the beauty of boxing" (yeah, right!), he provides some decent, if somewhat elementary, insights. There's also some interesting commentary from several of the fighters featured, including Herbie Hide saying that knocking out another man is "better than sex."

The tape's only shortcoming is that while many of the boxers are identified by on-screen graphics, others are not, leaving viewers wondering who they are watching.

Hearn saves his favorite for last, and it's a classic: Julian Jackson's one-punch (right hand) knockout of Herol Graham, who is out cold before he hits the floor. It's a perfect finale to an hour-and-a-half of virtually non-stop mayhem.

**—Nigel Collins**



# TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

| DATE | WINNER/LOSER | NETWORK | DIVISION | SIGNIFICANCE | MATCHUP | RESULT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8-11-00 | Nick Acevedo KO 9 John Molnar | ESPN2 | w | C- | B+ | B |
| *Acevedo outslugs Molnar in evenly matched showdown between hard-hitting prospects* | | | | | | |
| 8-11-00 | Vivian Harris D 10 Ivan Robinson | ESPN2 | jw | B+ | B+ | B |
| *Perfect example of why the majority scoring system doesn't work; all three judges had Harris winning!* | | | | | | |
| **8-11-00** | **Tim Austin W 12 Arthur Johnson** | **Show** | **IBF b** | **A-** | **C+** | **D-** |
| ***If this is Austin's way of campaigning for a big fight he better get used to fighting small fights*** | | | | | | |
| **8-12-00** | **Bebis Mendoza W Disq. 7 Rosendo Alvarez** | **Show** | **WBA jfl** | **B+** | **B+** | **C-** |
| ***In the last fight we'd ever see Mitch Halpern work, he pulled the plug too quickly on Alvarez*** | | | | | | |
| **8-12-00** | **Evander Holyfield W 12 John Ruiz** | **Show** | **WBA h** | **B+** | **C-** | **C** |
| ***If we cared at all about this fight we'd be a lot more upset at the decision*** | | | | | | |
| 8-18-00 | Stevie Forbes W 10 Moises Pedroza | ESPN2 | l | C | B- | C+ |
| *If we didn't know better we'd have thought we were watching Stevie Johnston; Forbes can fight* | | | | | | |
| 8-18-00 | Ben Tackie KO 1 Fred Pendleton | ESPN2 | jw | B | B- | B |
| *Boom! One straight right hand stretches Pendleton; candidate for Knockout of the Year* | | | | | | |
| 8-19-00 | Antonio Diaz W 10 Micky Ward | HBO | jw | A- | A+ | A- |
| *Younger, stronger, and not yet used to losing, Diaz outworks Ward in entertaining slugfest* | | | | | | |
| 8-19-00 | Naseem Hamed KO 4 Augie Sanchez | HBO | f | A | C | A- |
| *Hamed still hasn't learned how to fight, but with his punch he may never have to* | | | | | | |
| 8-25-00 | Jermaine Fields W 10 Julian Wheeler | ESPN2 | l | C | B- | B- |
| *Fields outworks Wheeler in good action fight, takes clear nod* | | | | | | |
| 8-25-00 | J.C. Candelo W 10 Michael Lerma | ESPN2 | jm | C+ | A- | C+ |
| *Candelo's not the most fun guy to watch, but he gets the job done* | | | | | | |
| **8-26-00** | **Vernon Forrest No-Contest 3 Raul Frank** | **HBO** | **IBF w** | **A** | **B-** | **D** |
| ***How sharp is Forrest's head that he opened up Frank's temple like that? We saw less blood in Saving Private Ryan*** | | | | | | |
| **8-26-00** | **Fernando Vargas KO 4 Ross Thompson** | **HBO** | **IBF jm** | **A+** | **C** | **B+** |
| ***Note to Felix Trinidad: Don't piss off Vargas at the press conference*** | | | | | | |
| 9-1-00 | Julio Alvarez W 10 James Crayton | ESPN2 | l | C | B | C |
| *As usual, Crayton does just enough to lose, but Alvarez not as bad as Stevie Johnston made him look* | | | | | | |
| 9-1-00 | Robert Allen W 10 Ronald Weaver | ESPN2 | m | C+ | C | F |
| *Ugh; if this was any duller we'd have thought we were watching a Keith Holmes title defense* | | | | | | |
| **9-2-00** | **Diego Corrales KO 3 Angel Manfredy** | **HBO** | **IBF jl** | **A** | **B+** | **B+** |
| ***Corrales spectacular in one-sided blowout of top-notch contender; Floyd who?*** | | | | | | |
| 9-2-00 | Erik Morales KO 7 Kevin Kelley | HBO | f | A- | C- | B- |
| *Morales fearless against shopworn Kelley; we can't wait to see him against top 126-pounder* | | | | | | |

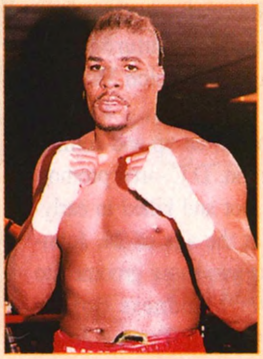
**Category Explanation:** "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

**Division key:** h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

**Network key:** PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Tel—Telemundo

## IS THERE A BOXER IN THE HOUSE?



*Davis: A heavyweight who delivers*

If Robert Davis thought squaring off against a 250-pound boxer who wanted to beat his head in was the greatest challenge he could face, the undefeated Ohio heavyweight found out otherwise on August 17 when he had to perform an emergency delivery of his own baby boy.

Davis, 22-0 (14), and his wife, Stephanie, were relaxing in their Barberton, Ohio, home when Stephanie's water broke and her contractions began. Davis gathered some belongings, grabbed his two daughters, Sealonda and Raven, and went to the hospital. After some tests were run, the doctor sent Davis and his family back home, saying it wasn't time.

That's when Davis, 28, transformed from heavyweight prosect to obstetrician. Soon after the family arrived home, at about 3 a.m., Davis heard his wife calling him from the bathroom. There was no false alarm this time, as Davis saw his son coming into the world right there on the bathroom floor.

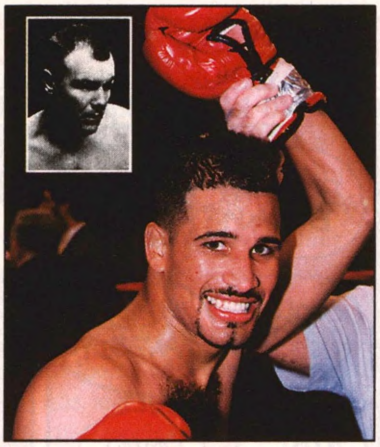
"I'm prepared for stuff in the ring; that's my job," Davis said. "This wasn't my job. I was doing someone else's job that night, but I did the best I could. I was shocked about the fact that she was having the baby right there. The Lord gave me the strength to get through it. It was overwhelming. My daughters were great. They were just as excited as I was."

Stephanie gave birth to Saivon Cheldon Davis, a healthy 19½-inch, seven-pound, four-ounce baby boy. On Saivon's birth certificate, next to attending physician it reads, "Robert Davis."

"Now some people call him 'Doctor Robert' or 'Dr. Davis,'" Stephanie said, laughing. "That's something I'll never forget. But I think this is going to be it for us having kids. We both wanted a son."

**—Joe Santoliquito**

## HIP-HOPPING OVER HISTORY



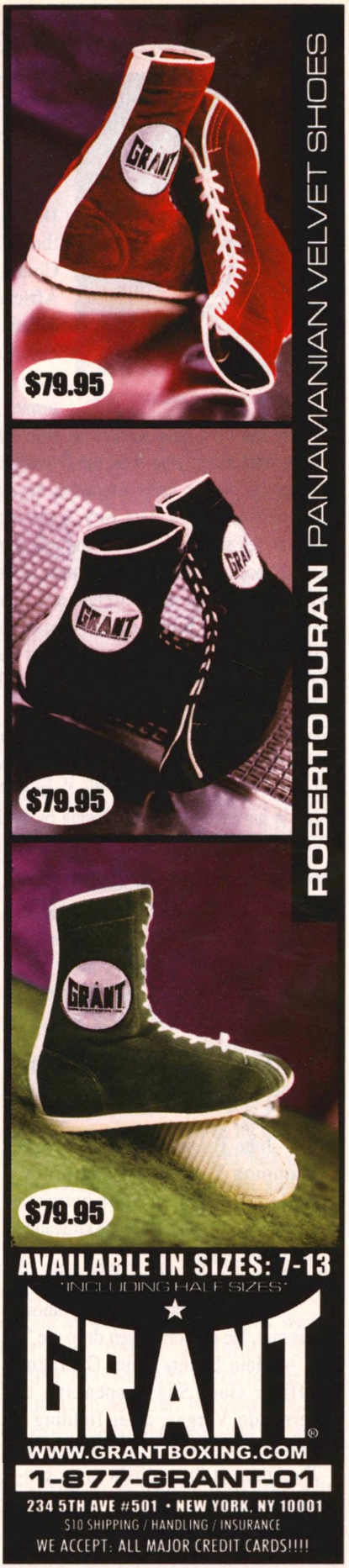
*McGoorty (inset) was a Wisconsin champ long before Morel*

With its hip-hop music, deejay Max Glazer, and other MTV-style accoutrements, *KO Nation*, HBO's latest boxing series, clearly is not meant to appeal to the dwindling membership of the Don Dunphy Fan Club. But purists might have less cause to cringe if as much attention was paid to historical accuracy as to the fighters' entry music.

For instance, during the telecast of the August 5 fight in Madison, Wisconsin, in which hometowner Eric Morel won the WBA flyweight title from Sompichai Pisnurachank, viewers were repeatedly told that it was the first world championship fight held in Wisconsin, and that Morel was the first boxer from Wisconsin to strap on a title belt. In fact, the Badger State hosted at least eight previous world title fights, going back to the middleweight championship match held in Milwaukee in 1908 between Stanley Ketchel and Billy Papke. And Morel joins three other Wisconsin boxers—bantamweight Frankie Conley, middleweight Eddie McGoorty, and junior welterweight Pinkey Mitchell—who were recognized as titlists.

Keeping up with the times isn't necessarily bad, as long as that also includes the old times.

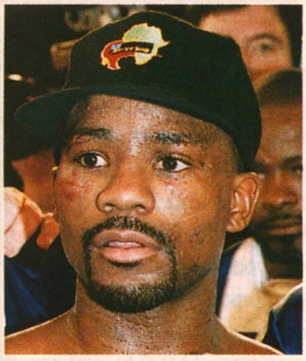
**—Pete Ehrmann**

# OUTSIDE THE ROPES

*Scholz: German standout dies*

In addition to the **Mitch Halpern** tragedy, we have quite a few other deaths to report this month. Probably the most prominent was **Elbert "Duke" Durden**, the former chairman of the Nevada State Athletic Commission and the first African-American to head an athletic commission, who died in mid-August at the age of 62 after a long battle with cancer. The former Brooklyn Dodgers minor league star also later worked as **Don King's** right-hand man ... **Steve McCrory**, who won the flyweight gold medal at the 1984 Olympics, died in early-August at the age of 36 after battling an undisclosed illness. McCrory, a product of the Kronk Gym in Detroit, fell short in his one world title shot as a pro, losing by 14th-round knockout to then-IBF bantam champ **Jeff Fenech** in '86 ... Former European middleweight and light heavyweight champion **Gustav "Bubi" Scholz** died of a heart attack in mid-August at the age of 70. The popular German fighter had one unsuccessful world title try, losing to then-light heavy champ **Harold Johnson** by decision in '62 ... Former Scottish, British, and European bantamweight champ **Peter Keenan** died in early-August just a few days shy of his 72nd birthday. Keenan, whom the British weekly *Boxing News* eulogized as "the Scottish Naz," had one world title shot in his excellent career, losing by decision to then-bantam king **Vic Toweel** in '52 ... Former British Empire welterweight champion **George Barnes**, Australia's biggest drawing card during the '50s, died in August at 73 years of age. Barnes boasted a pair of 1952 wins over future world lightweight champion **Wallace "Bud" Smith** ... **Tyrone Johnson Jr.**, an up-and-coming Washington, D.C.-area promoter, was shot and killed in early-August at the age of 24. Johnson, who was being groomed to take over Maddness Boxing from his father, **Tyrone Johnson Sr.**, was killed outside the D.C. Tunnel just hours after a card he promoted there had ended ... On to some less morbid news: The British Boxing Board of Control decided in mid-August to fine **Mike Tyson** $187,500 for his actions at the conclusion of his June fight with **Lou Savarese** in Scotland. "Iron Mike's" postfight comments about consuming **Lennox Lewis'** children earned him nothing more than a reprimand ... Two-time former WBC lightweight champ **Stevie Johnston** was threatened with jail time in early-August for failing to meet the terms of his probation after two drunken driving convictions. Johnston was stopped for drunken driving twice in 1998, and the Denver County Probation Department charged that he hadn't completed his alcohol education classes or his court-ordered therapy and had driven without a license ... Former featherweight contender **Richard Duran** turned himself in to police in mid-August, facing accusations of beating a man to death outside a bar in Sacramento, California. Prosecutors had not specified what the exact charge would be as of press time.



*Johnston: Violating probation*

## THE PUNCHLINES

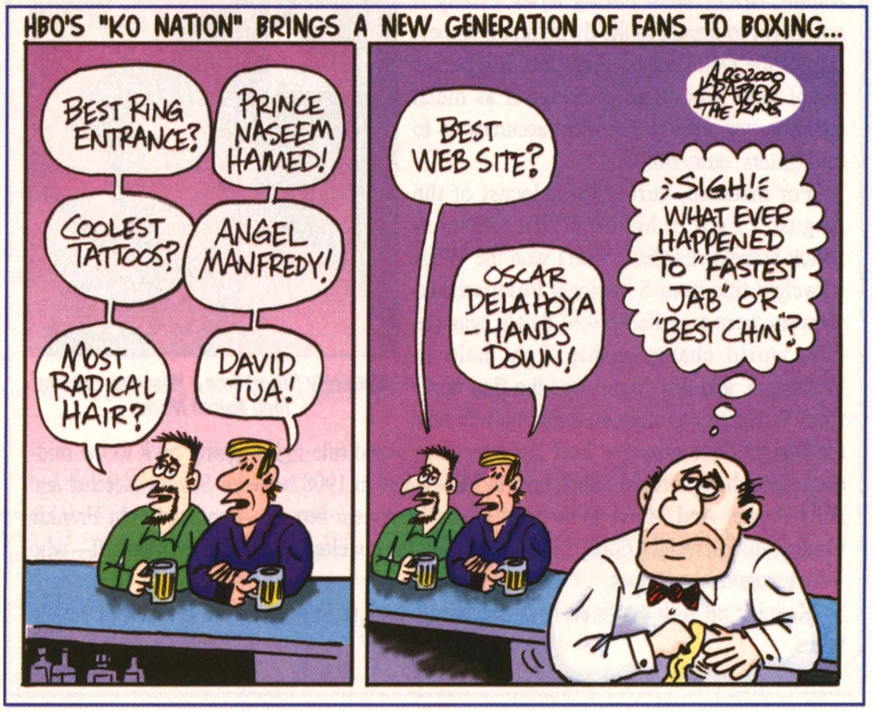
"This way, if McCall starts crying in the ring, Akinwande could give him a hug."

—John Hornewer, bantamweight champion Tim Austin's attorney, explaining why a fight between Oliver McCall and Henry Akinwande should be made

"You don't have to worry about this guy. He couldn't even drop me."

—Main Events Chief Operating Officer Gary Shaw, speaking to Fernando Vargas, after fielding a punch from Vargas opponent Ross Thompson at the prefight press conference melee

## AL KRATZER'S VIEW



The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

# RATINGS ANALYSIS

## POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **SHANE MOSLEY** Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
3. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Junior Middleweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Welterweight
5. **DIEGO CORRALES** Junior Lightweight
6. **NASEEM HAMED** Featherweight
7. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Junior Lightweight
8. **ERIK MORALES** Featherweight
9. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Junior Middleweight
10. **LENNOX LEWIS** Heavyweight

*(For period ended September 11, 2000)*

**HEAVYWEIGHTS:** Even though he won the WBA version of the title with a controversial decision over John Ruiz, Evander Holyfield slips from second to fourth due to his unimpressive performance.

**CRUISERWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS:** Joe Calzaghe (fourth last issue) advances to second on the strength of his TKO of Omar Sheika. Former WBA *lightweight* champ Dingaan Thobela came out of nowhere to win the WBC title with an upset knockout of Glenn Catley. Consequently, Thobela enters at fourth, while Catley falls from third to seventh. Guillermo Jones (10th last issue) departs to make room for Thobela.

**MIDDLEWEIGHTS:** Davey Hilton (seventh last issue) exits due to his points loss to Stephane Ouellet at super middle. Syd Vanderpool enters in the 10th position.

**JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**WELTERWEIGHTS:** No changes.

**JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS:** Antonio Diaz leaps from seventh to fourth after his comprehensive decision over Micky Ward, who retains the eighth spot.

**LIGHTWEIGHTS:** Even though Angel Manfredy's crushing kayo loss to Diego Corrales was at 130 pounds, Manfredy (third last issue) falls to fifth. Ben Tackie (10th last issue) jumps to seventh after his one-punch kayo of former IBF lightweight champ Fred Pendleton. Following his controversial draw with Vivian Harris, Ivan Robinson (eighth last issue), whose last three fights have all been above 135 pounds, falls from the rankings, making room for Colin Dunne to return at 10th.

**JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS:** Corrales' dominating kayo of Manfredy allows the IBF titlist to pass inactive WBC counterpart Floyd Mayweather and assume the number-one position. "Pretty Boy" is now second.

**FEATHERWEIGHTS:** Erik Morales debuts at second after winning the interim WBC title, and Derrick Gainer reenters at fourth after stopping Fred Norwood to win the WBA belt. Norwood (second last issue) descends to sixth. Leaving to make room for the two new entrants are Juan Carlos Ramirez (formerly eighth) and Cassius Baloyi (10th last issue).

**JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS:** Morales (second last issue) is now rated among the 126-pounders. Willie Jorrin went from unranked to fourth by outpointing Michael Brodie for the vacant WBC crown.

**BANTAMWEIGHTS:** Streaking Mauricio Martinez replaces Saohin Sithchai Condo at 10th.

**JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS:** New WBC boss Masamori Tokuyama is aboard at number two by decisioning In Joo Cho, who falls from second to fifth. Joel Luna-Zarate (eighth last issue) departs after being outpointed by 10th-rated Adonis Rivas.

**FLYWEIGHTS:** WBC champ Malcolm Tunacao (second last issue) and IBF kingpin Irene Pacheco (third last issue) trade places following Tunacao's draw with unheralded Celes Kobayashi.

**JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS:** Formerly unranked Bebis Mendoza is in at number four thanks to his DQ win over Rosendo Alvarez (fourth last issue) for the vacant WBA belt. Alvarez slips to fifth. Hidenobu Honda (10th last issue) exits to make room for Mendoza.

**STRAWWEIGHTS:** Joma Gamboa rockets from ninth to fourth by outpointing Noel Arambulet (fourth last issue) for the WBA title. Arambulet slides to fifth.

**POUND-FOR-POUND:** No changes in the first four spots, but a big shakeup thereafter. Corrales, who is probably fighting as well as anyone at any weight right now, debuts at number five. Inactive Mayweather (fifth last issue) plummets to seventh. Bernard Hopkins also exits due to inactivity and his so-so performance against Vanderpool, as does Marco Antonio Barrera, who looked ordinary outpointing Jose Luis Valbuena. Heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis is back at number 10. ■

# THE RING RATINGS

## *For Period Ended September 11, 2000*

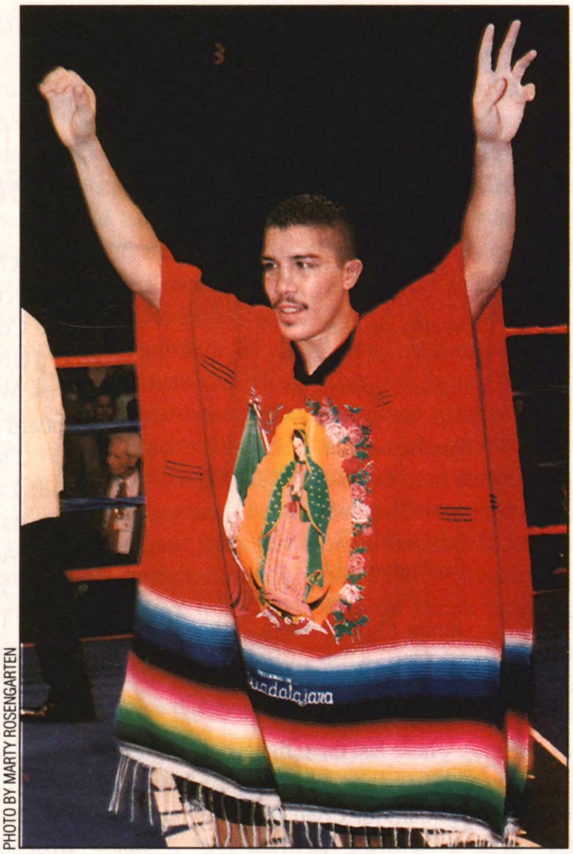



PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

***Antonio Diaz climbed three spots at junior welter with his win over Micky Ward***

## How Our Ratings Are Compiled

**In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.**

**Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.**

**These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.**

**Ratings By The Editors**

**Records By Fight Fax Inc.**

### HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight Unlimited*

1. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *37-1-1 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **DAVID TUA** New Zealand *37-1*
3. **OLEG MASKAEV** Staten Island, NY *20-2*
4. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *37-4-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *48-3*
6. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA *31-1*
7. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *31-1*
8. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *36-4*
9. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD *34-2*
10. **DAVID IZON** Pensacola, FL *26-3*

### JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 154 pounds*

1. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Puerto Rico *38-0 (WBA Champ)*
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA *20-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **DAVID REID** Philadelphia, PA *14-1*
4. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana *34-2-1*
5. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain *50-4 (WBC Champ)*
6. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia *19-0*
7. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL *40-3*
8. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI *42-3*
9. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** Mexico *75-4*
10. **TONY MARSHALL** Albany, NY *34-8-6*

### FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 126 pounds*

1. **NASEEM HAMED** England *35-0*
2. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico *38-0*
3. **PAUL INGLE** England *23-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **DERRICK GAINER** Pensacola, FL *34-5 (WBA Champ)*
5. **GUTY ESPADAS** Mexico *33-2 (WBC Champ)*
6. **FRED NORWOOD** St. Louis, MO *37-1-1*
7. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico *32-2*
8. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico *57-11*
9. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa *26-1*
10. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ** Hartford, CT *21-0*

### JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 122 pounds*

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico *51-3*
2. **BONES ADAMS** Henderson, KY *40-3-3 (WBA Champ)*
3. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa *30-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **WILLIE JORRIN** Sacramento, CA *27-0 (WBC Champ)*
5. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH** Las Vegas, NV *23-3*
6. **NESTOR GARZA** Mexico *38-2*
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico *27-1-1*
8. **ANTONIO CERMENO** Venezuela *38-3*
9. **MANNY PACQUAIO** Philippines *28-2*
10. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico *37-2-1*

### BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 118 pounds*

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH *21-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **PAULIE AYALA** Ft. Worth, TX *30-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM *48-1-2*
4. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand *27-1 (WBC Champ)*
5. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO** Colombia *42-2*
6. **CUAUHTEMOC GOMEZ** Mexico *48-7*
7. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark *46-2*
8. **ADAN VARGAS** Mexico *34-2-1*
9. **JORGE LACIERVA** Mexico *17-3-3*
10. **MAURICIO MARTINEZ** Panama *18-3-1*

## CRUISERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 190 pounds*

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany 31-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 26-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France 42-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 37-12-1
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina 29-3-1
6. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Pensacola, FL 33-5-1
7. **JAMES TONEY**
   Las Vegas, NV 59-4-2
8. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 26-5
9. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 45-3
10. **SAUL MONTANA**
    Mexico 33-7

## LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight limit: 175 pounds*

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 43-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 42-0
3. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 19-1-1
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 40-6-1
5. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY 23-3
6. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 39-3
7. **CHRIS JOHNSON**
   Canada 25-1-1
8. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 16-1
9. **GREG WRIGHT**
   Bronx, NY 18-6-2
10. **DERRICK HARMON**
    Chicago, IL 20-1

## SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 168 pounds*

1. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 20-0 (IBF Champ)
2. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 29-0
3. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 37-3-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **DINGAAN THOBELA**
   South Africa 40-7-2 (WBC Champ)
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 35-7
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX 38-6
7. **GLENN CATLEY**
   England 26-4
8. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 20-1-1
9. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 18-1
10. **RICHIE WOODHALL**
    England 26-2

## MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 160 pounds*

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA 37-2-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 30-1-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. 35-2 (WBC Champ)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 24-3-1
5. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 30-3-1
6. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden 23-0
7. **BERT SCHENK**
   Germany 24-0
8. **BRIAN BARBOSA**
   Passaic, NJ 28-4
9. **ANDREW COUNCIL**
   Washington, D.C. 30-7-3
10. **SYD VANDERPOOL**
    Canada 28-2

## WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 147 pounds*

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 35-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA 32-2
3. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA 25-3 (WBA Champ)
4. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 31-0
5. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI 51-3-1
6. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico 31-4-1
7. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
   Australia 28-0-1
8. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 20-0
9. **DERRELL COLEY**
   Capitol Heights, MD 34-2-2
10. **ANDREW LEWIS**
    Guyana 19-0-1

## JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 140 pounds*

1. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia 25-1-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 24-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 46-2 (WBA Champ)
4. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 33-2
5. **ENER JULIO**
   Colombia 21-3
6. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL 21-1
7. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO 22-2-1
8. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 35-10
9. **REGGIE GREEN**
   Clinton, MD 33-4
10. **HECTOR CAMACHO JR**
    Puerto Rico 29-0

## LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 135 pounds*

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 41-4 (WBC Champ)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 30-2
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 31-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico 38-3-1
5. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 33-5-1
6. **TAKANORI HATAKEYAMA**
   Japan 23-1-2 (WBA Champ)
7. **BEN TACKIE**
   Ghana 21-1
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 30-0
9. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA**
   Puerto Rico 51-6
10. **COLIN DUNNE**
    England 31-1

## JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 130 pounds*

1. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 33-0 (IBF Champ)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 23-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 22-0 (WBA Champ)
4. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 26-0
5. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea 21-1-1
6. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 12-2-1
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 32-1
8. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea 27-3-1
9. **GOYO VARGAS**
   Mexico 40-7-1
10. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
    Oxnard, CA 33-2

## JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 115 pounds*

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 38-1
2. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 22-2-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **HIDEKI TODAKA**
   Japan 17-2-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 19-3-1 (IBF Champ)
5. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea 18-1
6. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 33-8-3
7. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 41-3-2
8. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand 22-1-1
9. **SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 37-0
10. **ADONIS RIVAS**
    Nicaragua 16-1-1

## FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 112 pounds*

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 26-0 (WBA Champ)
2. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 24-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 11-0-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **SORNPICHAI PISNURACHANK**
   Thailand 19-1
5. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand 37-2
6. **MEDGOEN TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 20-1
7. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 38-1
8. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela 27-5
9. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 43-3
10. **ISIDRO GARCIA**
    Los Angeles, CA 21-1-1

## JR. FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 108 pounds*

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 48-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 22-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **PICHIT C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 22-1
4. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 27-0 (WBA Champ)
5. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 26-2-1
6. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand 42-3-1
7. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 18-0
8. **MELCHOR COB-CASTRO**
   Mexico 58-6-4
9. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN 15-2-1
10. **JORGE ARCE**
    Mexico 23-3-1

## STRAWWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 105 pounds*

1. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 16-2-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 23-1-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 41-1-1
4. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 29-5-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 12-2-1
6. **WANDEE SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 25-4
7. **SONGKRAM PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 20-2-1
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Columbia 32-2
9. **JOSE GARCIA**
   Colombia 22-5-1
10. **DANIEL REYES**
    Colombia 24-0

# NEW FACES

# NICK ACEVEDO

## *Welterweight*

**By Joe Santoliquito**

## PRO RECORD

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1992** | | |
| Dec. 23 | Henry Purdy, White Plains, NY | W 4 |
| **1993** | | |
| Aug. 25 | Edward Meertens, White Plains | KO 1 |
| Oct. 1 | Luis Ramos, New York City | KO 1 |
| **1994** | | |
| Oct. 12 | Francisco Pedrero, Atlantic City | KO 3 |
| **1997** | | |
| May 17 | Gerry Ocampo, Dover, NH | KO 2 |
| **1998** | | |
| Oct. 2 | Tim Lane, Staten Island, NY | KO 3 |
| **1999** | | |
| Jan. 22 | George Kellman, Venice, FL | W 6 |
| Sept. 25 | Curtis Wilkens, Harrisburg, PA | KO 2 |
| **2000** | | |
| May 13 | Leopoldo Salas, Villa Park, IL | W 6 |
| July 8 | Richard Hall, San Antonio, TX | KO 3 |
| Aug. 11 | John Molnar, Atlantic City | KO 9 |

| FIGHTS | WON | LOST | DRAW | KOs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 8 |

The images come in stark black-and-white. Used syringes on the kitchen table. A whirlwind of unknown faces rotating in and out of the house, some stumbling about as if in a trance. In an almost cartoonish motion, they seem to nearly kiss the floor, then spring back upright. Nick Acevedo learned something about heroin junkies at six years of age: They never seem to fall.

Acevedo was an innocent bystander as his mother and grandmother spiked themselves regularly with a magic remedy they thought would soothe their anxiety for a day. Acevedo lived in this shooting gallery, with the two people dearest to him junkies, supporting their habit by dealing on the side.

Memories of the taunts still make the hairs rise on the back of Acevedo's neck. *Your mother's a junkie*. Hearing that was like someone running their fingernails down a blackboard. So he had no recourse but to fight—that's all he knew, and something he found he could do well. Acevedo's a grown man now, a rugged 26-year-old welterweight looking for another chance. But actually, Acevedo reached adulthood on some levels when he was six, watching his mother and grandmother decay while his naive mind tried to understand.

Today, Acevedo fully understands what's going on around him. He finds himself launching a comeback to a pro career that never quite took off the way it was supposed to. Acevedo took a major step toward finally approaching his potential with a ninth-round stoppage of previously unbeaten John Molnar on August 11 at the Tropicana in Atlantic City on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. It marked the third time Acevedo fought in four months, equalling the combined number of fights he'd had the previous two years.

This is it for Acevedo—and he knows it. There

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

was a time when Acevedo, 11-0 (8), seemed destined to achieve a better life through boxing. After a highly successful 101-3 amateur career, Acevedo turned pro in 1992. But something interrupted his progress—self-doubt. That crept into his work habits, and consequently, Acevedo picked up the reputation in New York City boxing circles as a dog, someone with all the ability in the world, but little incentive to use it.

Hopefully, the Molnar victory will change that sullied image.

"The Molnar fight was probably the biggest fight I've had so far," said Acevedo, who is now being promoted by Cedric Kushner Promotions. "The promoters wanted to see what I had. No one wants to invest money in someone unless they can make some money off of you later.

"I had a previous reputation, I didn't work hard. I would work three times a week, if you

*(Continued on page 93)*

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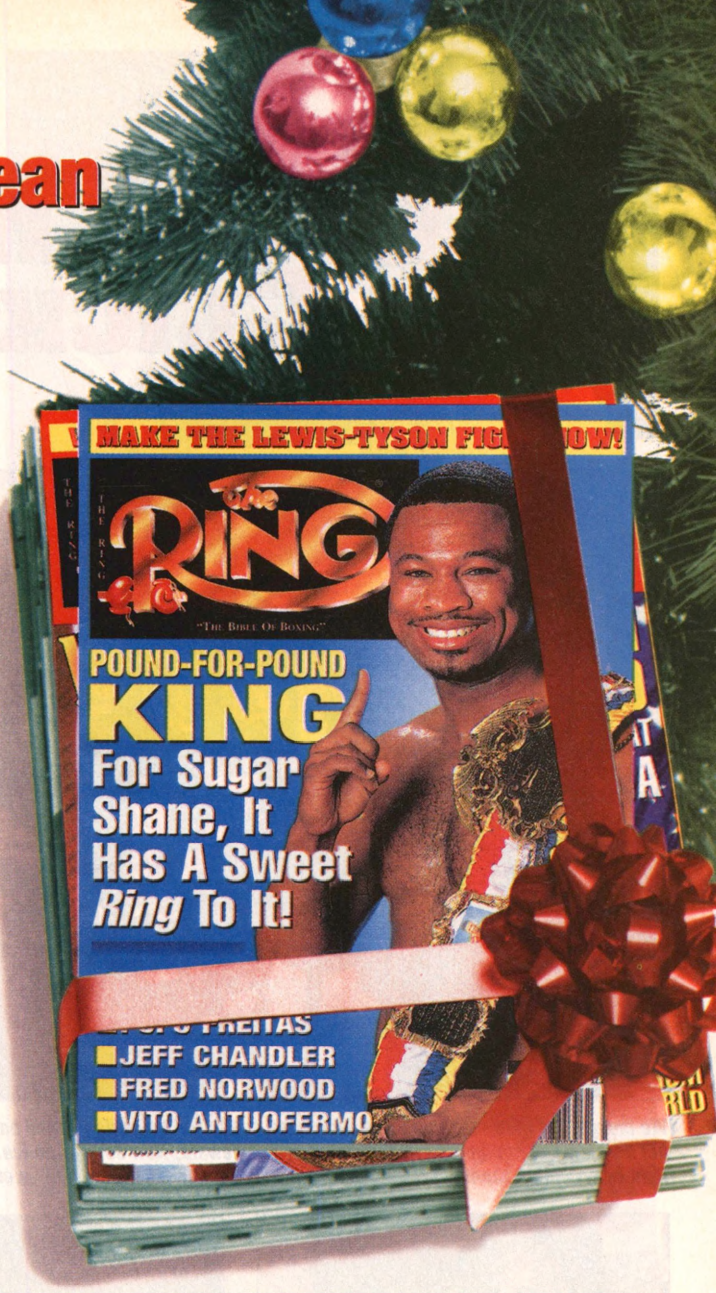


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# CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

*We thought the mild-mannered Roy Jones was one boxer we could depend on to stay out of trouble, but here we see him getting fingerprinted by the Newark, New Jersey, police. Our guess is that the light heavyweight champ got caught in a hit-and-run, a move he pulls off as effectively as anyone.*

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

*Who is that masked man? No, it's not professional wrestling legend Mil Mascaras giving boxing a shot. It's undefeated featherweight prospect Emanuel Lucero, trying to popularize lucha libre pugilism. Unfortunately, Lucero's requests to legalize the flying, top-rope uppercut were turned down.*

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*What was it Elvis Presley once said about fools rushing in? It was appropriate that Augie Sanchez brought a couple of (not very convincing) Elvis impersonators with him for his foolish challenge of Prince Naseem Hamed, which ended with "Kid Vegas" being brutally knocked out in the fourth round. Hamed didn't exactly love Sanchez tender, but he sure did leave him tender.*

PHOTO BY VINCENT K. BROWN

*You don't have to be a hardcore boxing fan to find something worth watching at promoter Cedric Kushner's Hammerstein Ballroom shows. In fact, when presented with the choice between watching blubbery heavyweights sweat all over each other and enjoying eye candy like this, it's a wonder anyone ever looks in the direction of the ring at all.*

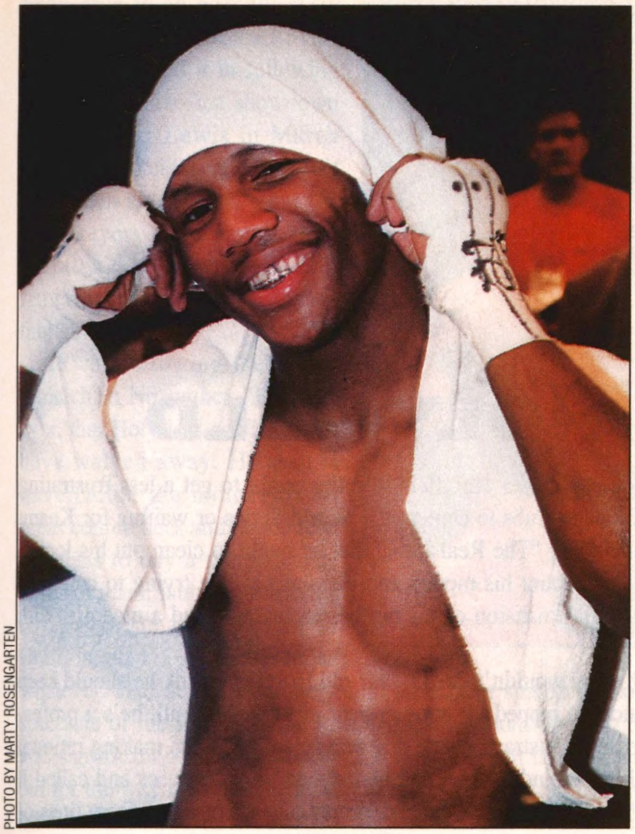


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*He's not only the IBF junior welterweight champion, he's also a human towel rack! Zab Judah dries off (and then some) following his sensational fourth-round knockout win over Terronn Millett in August.*

PHOTO BY MICHAEL J. TUPPS

*A king is crowned: Eric Raskin, managing editor of* The Ring, *officially presents Sugar Shane Mosley with his pound-for-pound championship belt at a mid-August show promoted by Tony Holden in Kansas City, Missouri. Mosley received a standing ovation from the fans, who, considering the way the Chiefs and Royals are looking these days, must have been especially appreciative to have a champion in town.*

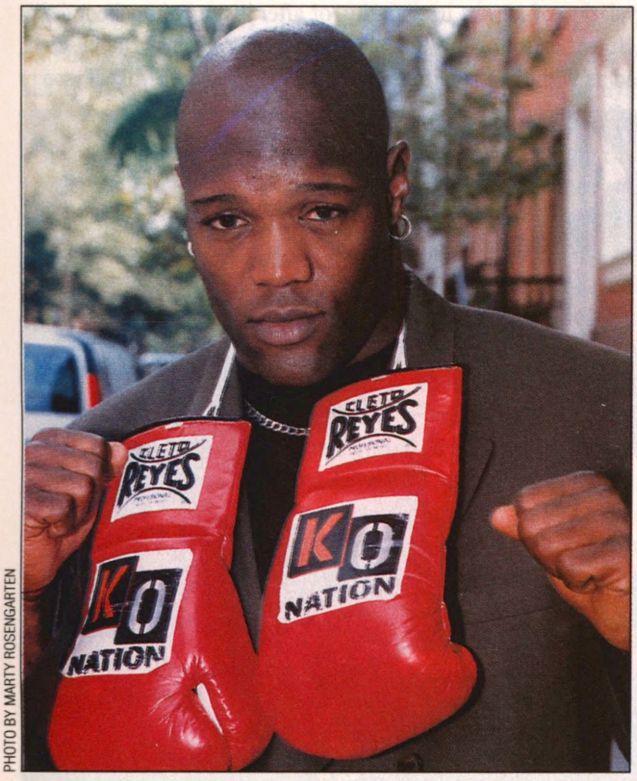
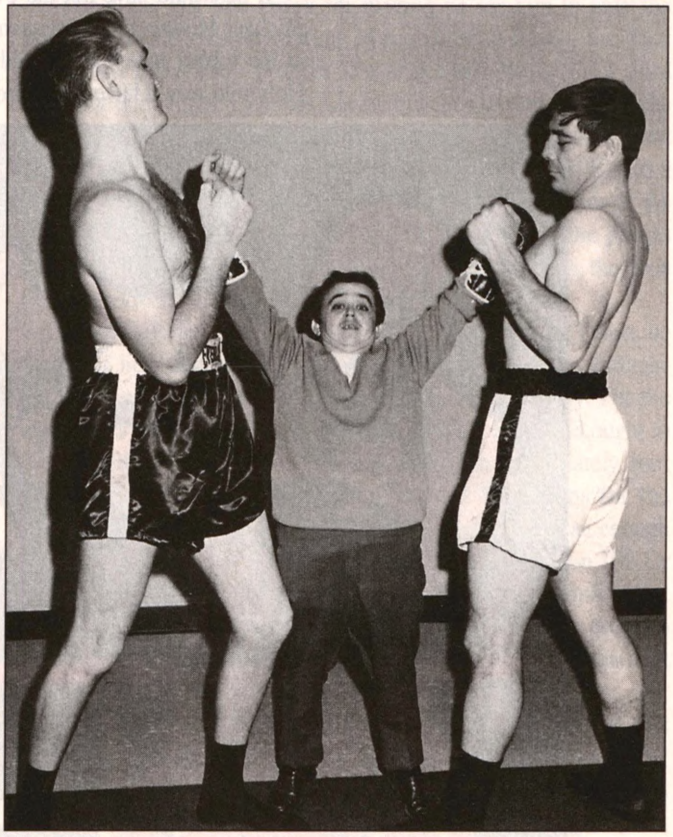



PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*What do you think Cliff Etienne's favorite boxing show is? "The Black Rhino" made a major splash defeating Lamon Brewster on the first edition of HBO's* KO Nation, *and he was scheduled to appear on the September installment of the hip-hop boxing program as well. A few more thrillers like the war he had with Brewster, and it's only a matter of time until they rename the show* Rhino Nation.

## NOSTALGIA CORNER



*That's a stretch: Cornerman Mario Lococo is giving it his best shot, but he can't quite reach the chins of heavyweights Chuck Wepner and Jerry Tomasetti in this 1968 photo. Still, Lococo might be able to make Wepner bleed with the strong breeze that accompanies a missed punch.*

# RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

## WHOLLY HOLYFIELD

Those of you who are waiting for Evander Holyfield to retire ought to get a less frustrating hobby, like waiting for the Chicago Cubs to capture the World Series or waiting for Keanu Reeves to win an Oscar. Convincing "The Real Deal" that he ought to clean out his locker and retreat to his Georgia homestead to count his money and blessings is like trying to convince Hugh Hefner that he should put that silly mansion of his on the market and find a nice girl with whom he can settle down.

When you think about it, though, why wouldn't the 37-year-old Holyfield think he should keep getting his hands wrapped and his noggin rapped for another year or two? After all, he's a professional boxer, which means he possesses that strange gene that prevents a guy from making rational career decisions. And he'd be quick to remind us that, had he listened to us geniuses and called it quits the other times we suggested he do so, he would have deprived himself of a few more lines of glowing copy on his Hall of Fame plaque.

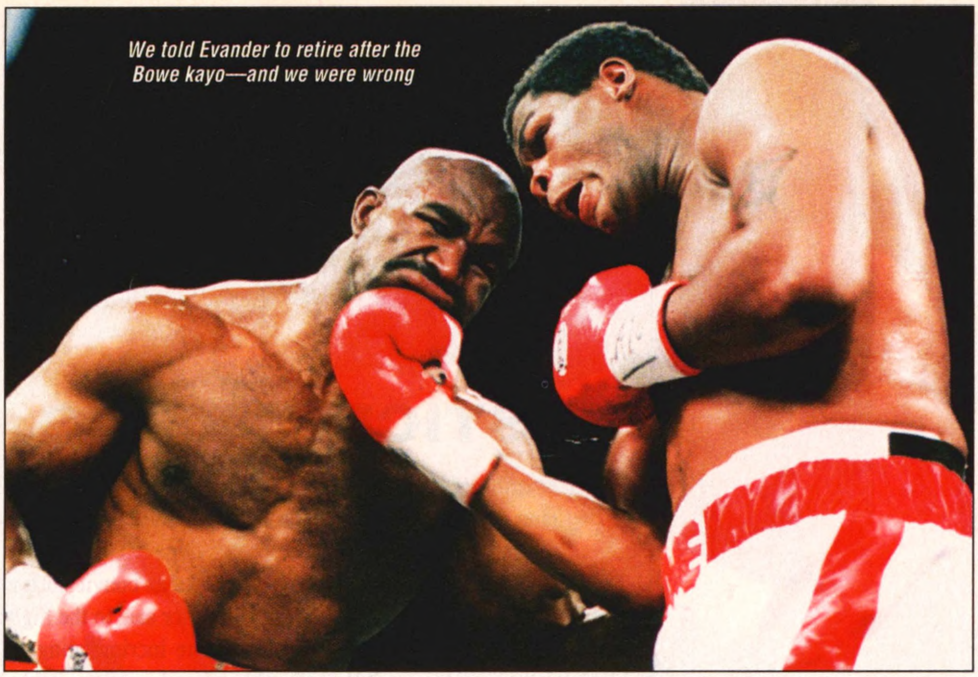
As much as it troubles me to admit it, the old guy's got a point.

If he would have put the Sweet Science in his rearview mirror following that decision loss to Michael Moorer and subsequent revelation of a heart irregularity, or after his ugly knockout defeat in the rubber match with Riddick Bowe, or following that subpar showing against Bobby Czyz, Holyfield would have never provided us with the magnificence of his upset kayo of Mike Tyson or

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

*Holyfield looked worse than ever against Ruiz*

been able to so convincingly avenge the Moorer setback. Had Holyfield packed it in following his controversial first showdown with Lennox Lewis in March 1999, The Real Deal wouldn't have been able to confound the doomsayers once more in the rematch, a contest several ringsiders (though not me) thought he won.


*We told Evander to retire after the Bowe kayo—and we were wrong*

It was following the Lewis rematch in November '99, however, that Holyfield *really* should have walked away. He should have called the mother of all press conferences and announced his plans to buy a minor league baseball team, launch an Internet company, run for governor of Georgia, start a stud service, or whatever. Had he done so, we would have been spared the sorry spectacle of the John Ruiz bout, a WBA championship fight that was significant not for the hollow title Holyfield left the ring with, but for the way it further tarnished the once-great star's image and left no doubt that he's boxing's biggest walking contradiction. And I don't mean that in a good way.

Holyfield has long been a man of mixed signals. A devout Christian, he has nonetheless fathered so many kids out of wedlock, you'd think he was a small forward in the NBA. Though not considered a puncher, he won his first heavyweight crown with one shot and has floored the likes of Bowe, Tyson, and Ray Mercer, a trio that hit the canvas once in 111 combined bouts before kissing Holyfield's fist. Though he's an outstanding boxer, Holyfield can't resist the temptation to slug, sometimes to his detriment. And though he could end up being considered one of the five best big men of all-time, Holyfield, at least in my opinion, probably would have fallen to a handful of guys who would probably be rated below him: Joe Frazier, Sonny Liston, a prime Larry Holmes, and the original version of George Foreman.

With the Ruiz fight, though, came a whole bunch of new contradictions. Holyfield, for years boxing's hardest worker, appeared undertrained. The guy who once legitimized the cruiserweight title and always brought dignity and respect to the heavyweight throne was suddenly competing for a paper crown no one respected and, worse yet, was *making lame excuses* for doing so. Though often generous, he was now appearing greedy, stealing a payday and "title shot" some younger fighter could have used. And, sadly, a Holyfield who had been painfully honest to the point of saying that he believed God favored him over his impious opponents, was now unable to admit that Ruiz had bested him.

Throughout his career, Holyfield has always had this amazing ability to make people forget the negatives about him. When he was slapping around bad guy Tyson and stretching Moorer, we forgot that we'd been labeling The Real Deal "finished" after the Czyz fight. When people talk about Holyfield vs. Bowe, the give-and-take first bout or the stirring Holyfield comeback in the rematch are recalled, but almost never does anyone talk about Holyfield crashing for good in the eighth round of the rubber match. Even Holyfield's heart troubles were conveniently swept from our minds, the way Rocky Balboa's bad eye, such an integral part of the plot of *Rocky II*, was never referred to when our hero was kicking ass and taking bows in *III*, *IV*, and *V*.

As he has stumbled through the twilight of his career, however, Holyfield has lost that knack for making us see him in only the best of light. The disappointing 24 rounds with Lewis, the Ruiz mess, and Holyfield's promise (no, make that *threat*) of a third shootout with either Tyson or Lewis threatens to turn him into the heavyweight Sugar Ray Leonard. Remember how Leonard went from being the all-American, gold-medal wearing, 7-Up Kid to a symbol of greed and egomania? The last straw in the minds of the public was the rematch with Thomas Hearns, when the judges bailed out His Sweetness with a draw. From that point on, the boos came in torrents. Not a very pretty final act.

When Holyfield overcame incredible odds to topple Tyson, he appeared headed for one of the more positive of boxing endings. Well, not anymore. Everything has gotten awfully messy. For the sake of his brain cells and his fading reputation, Holyfield ought to retire right now. Showtime and Don King can immediately start booking the catering hall and sending out invitations for the farewell party. The richest fighter in history has more than enough money and hardware. Who wants to see Holyfield-Tyson III? Or Holyfield-Lewis III? Not me. Nor do I want to see Holyfield get beaten bloody or dropped on his back by some kid who grew up with The Real Deal's poster on his bedroom wall. That iron chin of Holyfield's, you know, can't endure forever.

Deep down, even the walking contradiction has to realize that the judges rewarded him not for the punches he landed over 12 rounds against Ruiz, but for the ones he'd landed over the previous 16 years against Tyson, Moorer, Buster Douglas, Dwight Qawi, Carlos DeLeon, and others.

Gives new meaning to the words "Christian charity," doesn't it? ■

# DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

## JUSTICE, BOXING, AND RACE

Sometimes it seemed IBF chieftain and founder Bob Lee must have been emulating mob hit man Albert Anastasia. Anastasia, you might recall, enjoyed teasing the world by leaving his tell-tale ace of spades on the corpses of his victims.

But not even Anastasia left as many clues as convicted felon Lee, who several witnesses testified had put his sanctioning organization up for sale to the highest bidder.

If you believe these witnesses, who were incriminating *themselves* with every statement they uttered, the way Lee ran his outfit, if he turned over a suitable chunk of cash in a sealed envelope, Richard Simmons could have won a number-three ranking.

Federal jurors in New Jersey watched videotapes of Lee tucking away gratuities with both hands. Yet they found him innocent on 27 counts of taking bribes and racketeering. The jurors then turned around and found him guilty on six counts related to avoiding taxes and laundering the bribes they deemed him innocent of taking.

They declared co-defendant Lee's son and go-fer, Bob Lee Jr., innocent on all counts.

What explains the jury's reluctance to act on the evidence? The Lees' defense centered on their contention they were two more black men screwed by the white man's crazy, unjust court system.

*King and Lee: Know how to play the race card*

PHOTO BY JAY LASH

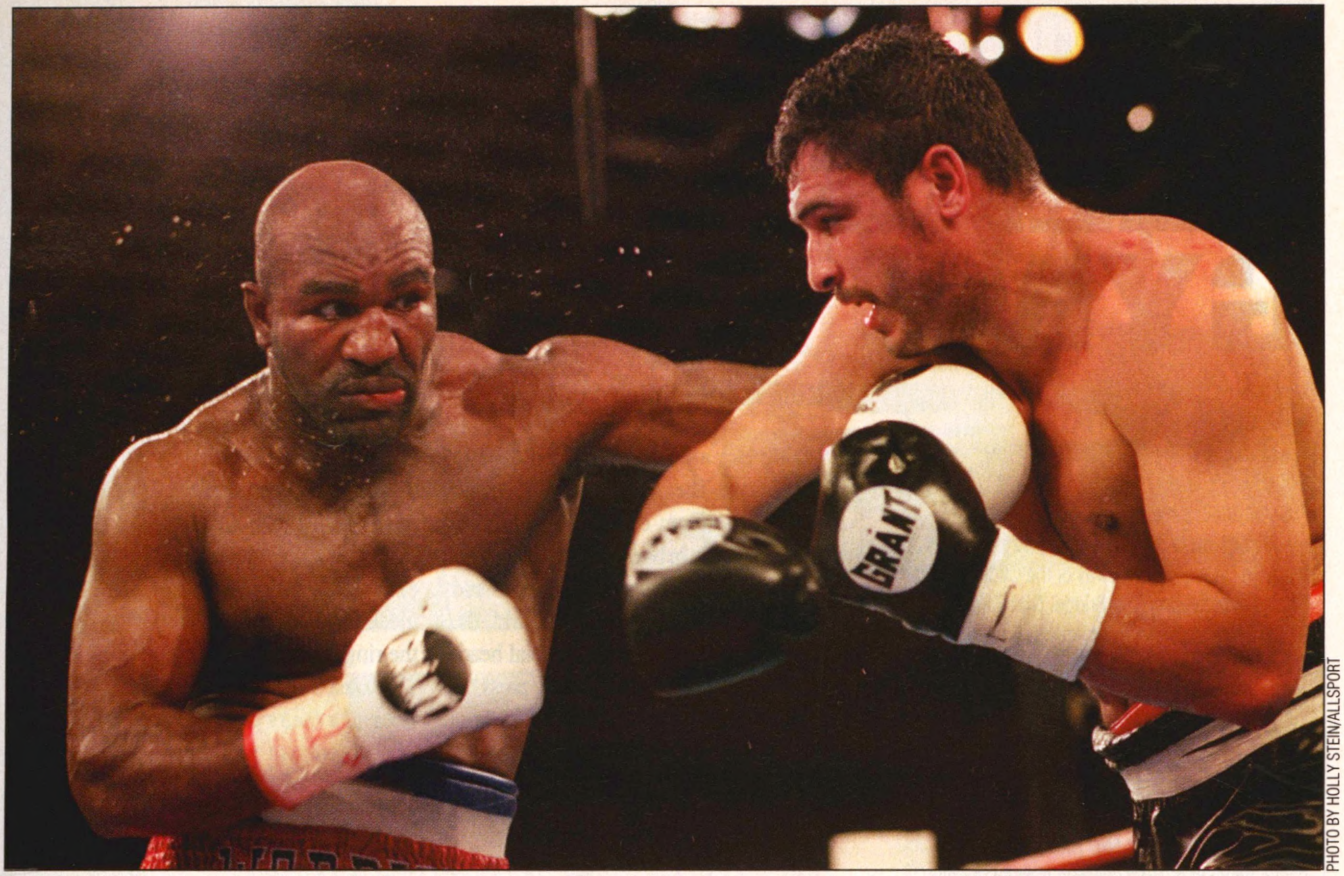



PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/ALLSPORT

***Did Holyfield's gift decision over Ruiz set up Holyfield-Tyson III?***

And it's a good bet the jurors had race in mind when, after four months of trial, they found the Lees innocent of most charges.

This is an uncomfortable subject for most of us, but it's healthier to discuss it than to let it silently fester. Anyway, I don't denigrate jurors for occasionally injecting a kind of street justice into the courtroom. I fail to agree with them, but I understand and sympathize with their thinking.

Federal prosecutors tend to be a smart bunch of lawyers who talk tough and think they're savvy. But basically they're suburban brats who don't know much about people struggling to eke out a living over on the raw side of town.

The feds hinged their case on the testimony of Lee's toady, Doug Beavers, a white man who ratted out his boss and boss' son to save his own hide. The prosecution also used testimony by white promoters Bob Arum, Cedric Kushner, and Dino Duva, who admitted paying bribes to the Lees' IBF to manipulate ratings their way.

It's not always easy to sort out extortion from bribery. But the prosecutors filed no charges against the promoters. And guess what? Like Beavers, they're white, too.

That kind of racial sorting might well be accidental, but it was unlikely to meet with a pleased response from minority jurors. Most of them know young black men caught up in the justice system's meat grinder. There are more black men in prison than in college. In the black community, these convicts aren't just statistics. They're flesh-and-blood acquaintances.

These same jurors know, for example, that by act of Congress, selling crack cocaine, the ghetto drug of choice, is punished much more severely than selling the more expensive white man's brand of powder cocaine.

Crack offenders are filling up the penitentiaries so fast that prison systems make room by granting early release to rapists, armed robbers, and other violent criminals. And guess where the dangerous perpetrators go? Back to the inner-city to prey on law-abiding minority citizens who sit on juries.

Anyone who says America's racial problem has been solved isn't looking around very hard. If Shane Mosley was white, they'd be writing songs about him.

So sometimes when the courts hand minority jurors a stinking fish like Bob Lee Sr., they show their disgust with the whole broken process by throwing him back in the pond. But they're wrong.

Guys like Lee don't help anybody but themselves. And their corruption is aimed squarely at the fighters, most of whom are black and Hispanic. The decent folks in boxing—and there are plenty of them—are sick of watching the wrong fighters get the right fights.

The prosecutors were unable to present evidence that Lee and his gang actually rigged decisions. But mere stupidity can't explain all those routinely asinine scorecards that always lean toward the guys with the juice.

Which brings us to Lee's good buddy Don King, emperor of the shaft and the original target of the feds' investigation. When three Las Vegas judges robbed the King-promoted John Ruiz and gave the 12-round decision to the ancient, slow-footed, slow-handed Evander Holyfield, I wondered whether we were seeing a new first—a Don King fighter screwed by the judges.

But then I saw Don with a smile on his face the size of a meatloaf, and I knew the world had not tipped off its axis after all. Don't be surprised if King Babble-On had his mind on something immensely profitable with Evander. Could that something be Mike Tyson? ■

BEING THERE

# GLEASON'S GYM

PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Bruce Silverglade has owned Gleason's since 1985.

The inside of one of the Sweet Science's most famous sweatshops isn't fancy, but it has everything a boxing gym should have, including plenty of atmosphere.

## IF YOU GO

**Location:** 75 Front Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201; phone: 718-797-2872; fax: 718-797-2857; e-mail: gleasons75@aol.com

**Directions:** By car, take Exit 28 off the Brooklyn Queens Expressway or the Cadman Plaza exit of the Brooklyn Bridge. Bus: B25 or B41 to Old Fulton and Front Streets. Subway: F Train to York Street; A or C Train to High Street; 2 or 3 Train to Clark Street.

**Hours of Operation:** 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. For non-members, there is a daily $10 visitor or user fee.

**Who to look out for:** Among the top contenders and champions who train there daily are Zab Judah, Junior Jones, Arturo Gatti, David Telesco, Oleg Maskaev, and Wayne Braithwaite. Top-flight trainers who ply their trade at Gleason's include Hector Roca, Bob Jackson, Tommy Gallagher, Yoel Judah, and former contenders Reggie Ford and Edwin Viruet. Two of the more popular white-collar trainers, both of whom are also world-class raconteurs, are David "The Renegade Jew" Lawrence, a 53-year-old former Wall Street whiz kid and rap singer who had a brief but colorful pro boxing career in the early-'90s, and Domenico Monaco, a once-promising lightweight who turned pro in 1973 and, at age 49, is still active as a lovable, globetrotting loser.

**Advice to greenhorns:** Don't be awed by the fact that many consider the fabled Gleason's a mecca for boxing lore. As intimidating as it may seem when you enter the cacophonous and cavernous space, it is one of the most user- and visitor-friendly gyms in the world.

Looking good: Gym patrons check out their sweaty reflections.

**By Robert Mladinich**

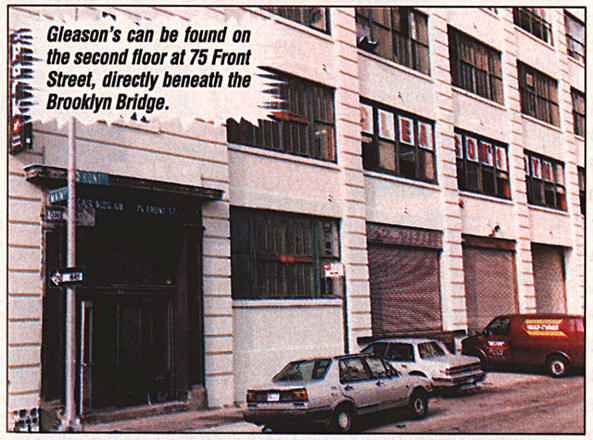
Sitting like a pugilistic bastion directly beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, Gleason's Gym offers a cultural and metaphorical link between the most divergent of eras. Besides being the oldest and busiest active boxing gym in the world, the mythical venue serves as an unofficial headquarters for the international boxing press, as well as champions, contenders, and upstarts from around the world. Bruce Silverglade, who has owned the gym since 1985, wouldn't have it any other way.

Gleason's has 850 members, including several hundred amateur and professional fighters of varied skill levels. Nearly 200 men and 160 women make up the recreational brigade. All pay the same $45 monthly fee—quite a bargain in this age of overpriced, trendy health spas. Not only do members get a private, full-sized locker with their name on it, they have the privilege of training at what many consider one of the last vestiges of a bygone era. There is an abundance of fine trainers on hand, whose negotiable fees start at as little as $5 a session.

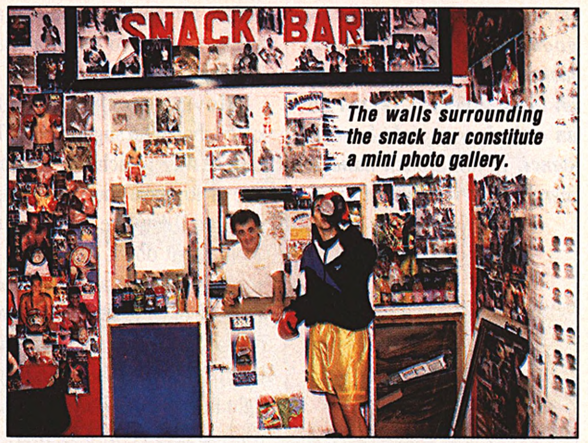
At any given time one can find a world champion training alongside a white-collar warrior. The latter cut a wide swathe through New York life, and include actors, businessmen, politicians, writers, students, police officers, and retirees. Women members range from housewives to professional dancers and stage and screen actors. Adding to the appeal for the more competitively oriented neophytes are monthly white-collar boxing nights, where participants square off in raucous, well-supervised three-round bouts. Although no official winners are declared, all contestants are awarded a trophy. More importantly, they get to experience the roar of the crowd and the exhilaration of climbing those three long steps into the ring.

Housed on the second floor of a factory building in a downtown industrial area, Gleason's has four rings—one of which is utilized solely by professional wrestlers—concrete floors, and blood red walls. Although there is a small snack bar for visitors, the venue wreaks of age-old sweat, hard work, and the lingering spirit of the 110 world champions who have called Gleason's home. Among them are Muhammad Ali, Mike Tyson, Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Jake LaMotta, Larry Holmes, Phil Terranova, Michael Spinks, Iran Barkley, Vito Antuofermo, Wilfred Benitez, Hector Camacho, Thomas Hearns, Julio Cesar Chavez, and Mike McCallum. While preparing for his 1995 bout with Tyson at Gleason's, Buster Mathis Jr. compared training there to fighting at Madison Square Garden.

There's even a place at Gleason's for Roman poets.



Gleason's can be found on the second floor at 75 Front Street, directly beneath the Brooklyn Bridge.




The walls surrounding the snack bar constitute a mini photo gallery.

The Gleason's legacy was spawned in 1937, when fight manager Robert Gagliardi needed a new training venue in the Bronx. Because of immense anti-Italian sentiment during that era and an Irish proliferation of the sport, he thought it would be wise to attach a bit of Celtic lineage to the gym. He named it after Bobby Gleason, an immensely popular second-rate pug in his stable. Before long, Gagliardi started answering to that name himself. After several moves, the gym landed at its present location in 1986. Silverglade has spared no expense in making it a friendly environ for everyone who walks through the door, whether it be a visiting champion, overseas tourist, or awe-struck youngster seeking an autograph or photo opportunity with a boxing luminary. His attitude is a far cry from Gleason's circa 1978, when located on West 30 Street in Manhattan. An old, wizened gym rat stood sentry at the door, collecting a dollar from every visitor. Armed with his very first press card, this writer recalls muttering "Press" and cockily breezing past him.

"Press your f___ing pants," he snorted. "It's still a dollar to get in." ■

# THE A, B, C & DEAS OF BOXING

By Tommy Deas

## THE STANCE

***You've watched the world's best fighters and read about them in this magazine, and now you want to give boxing a try, or at least learn a little more about the mechanics of the sport. Welcome to THE RING'S new bi-monthly instructional feature on boxing's basics. Bear in mind, the techniques described here are just one of many approaches to the Sweet Science. The most important thing is to find a good coach and follow his instructions. All instructions on these pages are geared for an orthodox, or right-handed, stance. If you are left-handed, merely turn everything around.***

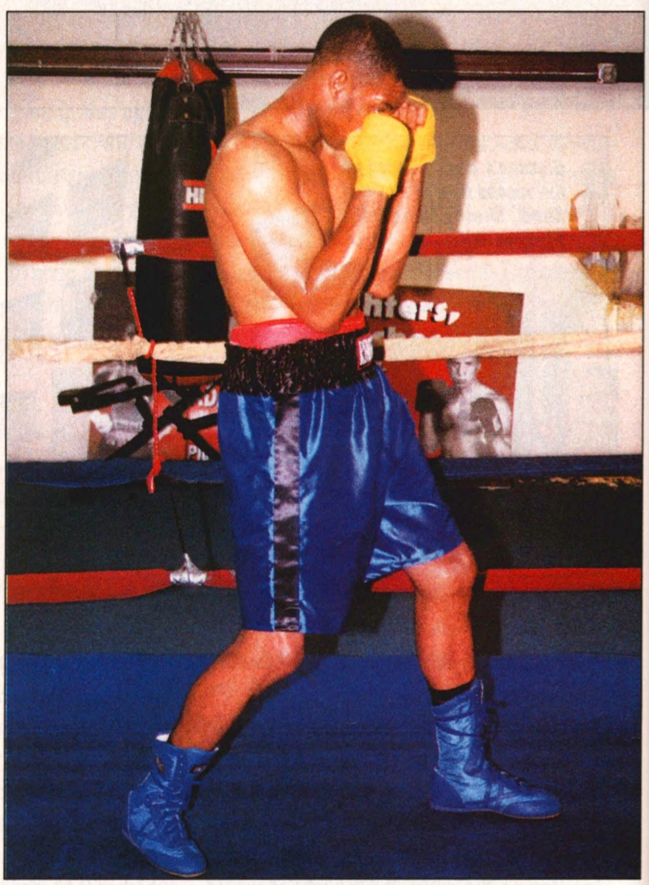
Before you ever throw your first punch, you must first know how to take a proper boxing stance to balance yourself for offense and defense. The goal of this installment is to demonstrate the proper hand and foot placement and posture for the moves that you will make in the ring.

The basic boxing stance starts with the feet. You want to set them a little wider than shoulder-width apart and find a comfortable distance where you can easily shift your weight from one foot to the other. The front foot (the left foot) should be positioned with your toes pointed toward your opponent, and the back foot turned in the same direction so that it is not at a right angle to the front foot. In short, both feet should generally be pointed in the direction of the opponent.

Just as important is keeping your heels off the floor. Any trainer will tell you that a boxer doesn't have heels. Getting caught flat-footed in this sport can be dangerous to your health. Keeping your weight on the balls of your feet allows for quicker mobility and makes it easier to throw a punch from any position.

Moving up the body, the knees should be slightly bent. The easiest way to achieve this posture is to make the first motions you would make if you were about to sit down. You want the knees to flex just a bit, but not to a point of discomfort. A good rule of thumb is that a boxer who is tall for his weight should try to fight tall, and bend the knees less, while a fighter who is short for his weight should exaggerate his shortness and bend his knees more.

With the upper body, the key rule is this: "Don't be a square." The torso should be twisted so that the trunk of the body is not squared to the opponent. The left shoulder should be turned in line with the left knee, so that the left shoulder is facing your opponent



***Cruiserweight Marcus McGee demonstrates how the proper boxing stance looks from three different angles. Note that the legs are always slightly bent and that the chin is always tucked down behind the shoulder.***

and the right shoulder lags behind. If your shoulders are squared to the opponent, you are exposing more target area to the opponent and giving him an easier chance at landing solid, clean punches.

The placement of the hands is extremely important for offense and defense. Many boxing trainers have differing opinions on exactly where to hold the hands, but most would agree on the same general guidelines.

The left hand should be kept a little higher than the right, because it will be used to fend off blows from the opponent's power hand, and because it is closer to the opponent, thus allowing less room for reaction time. Keeping the left about eyebrow high and a few inches in front of the face is a good starting point. Some trainers teach their boxers to get in the habit of tapping themselves on the left eyebrow while they box so the left will always be kept up in the course of a match.

The right hand should be kept a little lower, about chin high, or no higher than the right cheek. It should be kept a little closer to the face, almost resting against the cheek.

You will notice many top-notch professionals allowing their hands to drop to dangerously low levels. You may also notice that in many cases they get caught with punches that would not have landed if they had kept their hands higher, but do not be tempted to follow their lead. As a beginner, you have not developed the reflexes to anticipate the punches that are about to come your way. Most seasoned professionals have worked for years to develop these skills, so start with your hands up until you gain the knack for knowing what punch your opponent is going to throw before he even knows it.

The hands should be kept in a loose fist when not punching. You don't want to squeeze your hands too tight until it is time to strike. Clenching the fist tends to tense up the whole body, and one of the most essential things to learn is to relax in the ring.

The fist should be held so that the outside of the hand is faced toward the opponent, rather than opening the hand and showing the palm to the opponent. The side of the hand below the little finger should be in line with the target, so that when you punch it is easier to get more twist, or snap, on your punches.

Finally, the head should be tucked so that the chin falls just inside your left shoulder. Keeping your chin down isn't as easy as it sounds, especially when you are punching, but there is not a more important lesson in the sport. The neck must be bent forward so that you are nearly looking through the top of your skull. There is a tendency for beginners to lean forward at times, but it is important that you not allow your head to extend in front of your left knee. The harder it is to reach your chin, the more difficult a time your opponent will have inflicting a damaging blow. The first rule of boxing is to protect yourself at all times, and it starts with protecting the chin.

That's it for the first lesson. Practice your stance and check back in two months to learn how to throw the most basic of punches, the left jab. ■

***Tommy Deas is a sports writer for The Tuscaloosa [Alabama] News and a trainer of professional and amateur boxers.***

PHOTOS BY CHRIS BURT

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**Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again.** Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

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**Jan. 1995: A Puncher's Dream: Oliver McCall Upsets Boxing's Balance Of Power.** Plus: Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

**May 1995: The State Of The Game.** Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

**June 1995: (92-Page Special): Foreman Frowns Upon The Age Gap: "I Don't Think Tyson Should Fight Anyone But Me." Plus:** Least deserving heavyweight challengers, Carlos Monzon, Kostya Tszyu.

**July 1995: Pernell Whitaker: *The Ring* Makes "Pound-For-Pound" An Official Title.** Plus: Riddick Bowe, Ike Quartey, Benn-McClellan, TV prospects, Hector Acero-Sanchez, Harry Matthews, What If ... Robinson-Burley.

**Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley!** Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

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**June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever.** Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

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# BOB LEE (ALMOST) NOT GUILTY!

## IBF TRIAL ENDS IN SPLIT DECISION

**By Kevin Iole**

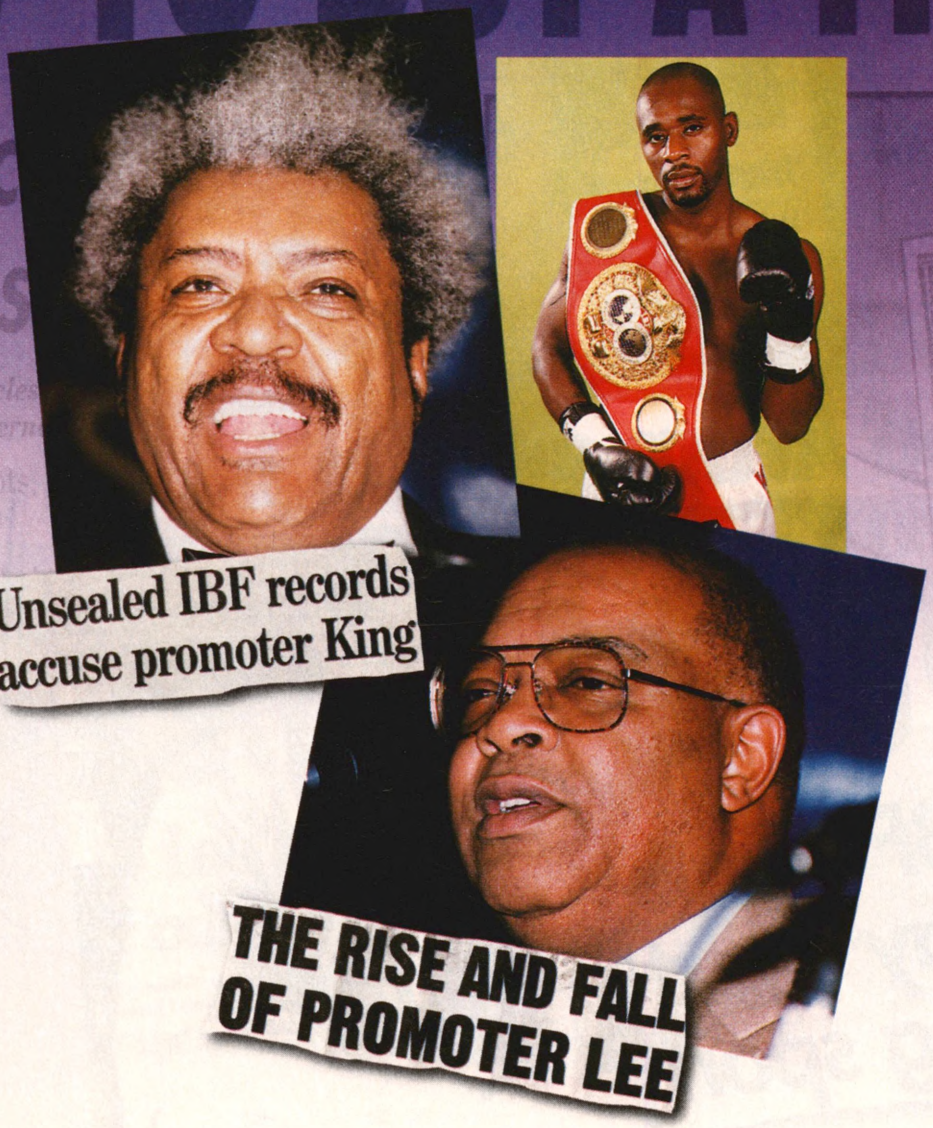
Bob Arum spent nearly a week on the witness stand in the federal racketeering trial of former IBF President Robert W. Lee Sr. The testimony of the Top Rank president, the most prominent promoter to bear witness for the government in the trial in which Lee was accused of accepting bribes for rankings, filled four books nearly a half-inch thick apiece.

But in the end, Arum's cooperation with the government backfired on him. The jury rejected the core of the government's case and convicted Lee on only six of 33 counts against him in perhaps the most infamous trial in the sport's history.

Though it may not be clear for some time what the ultimate effects of the jury's decision will be, there is no question that the events that unfolded during the four-month trial shook up the sport. Some of the biggest names in the game, promoters like Arum, Cedric Kushner, and Dino Duva, admitted they made payments to Lee in order to obtain preferential treatment for their fighters. On top of that, perhaps the sport's most recognizable figure, promoter Don King, was an unindicted co-conspirator.

The charges suggested what many felt they had known all along, that boxing was, simply put, a corrupt sport. When the jury, after deliberating for 15 days, found Lee not guilty on the most serious charges against him, it did little to change that perception.

"This is what I hate about it," Arum



## Unsealed IBF records accuse promoter King

# THE RISE AND FALL OF PROMOTER LEE

said. "No good is going to come of this trial. I feel I did the right thing after making a huge, huge mistake [by making a $100,000 payment to get Lee to allow then-unranked Axel Schulz to challenge George Foreman for the heavyweight title in 1995], but this isn't a situation where there are any winners. Who feels good about this? It's just a bad situation."

And that's the situation that boxing finds itself in, with little mainstream acceptance and flat pay-per-view numbers in even the biggest fights. The most heavily hyped fight of 2000, Shane Mosley's challenge of Oscar De La Hoya for the welterweight title, did barely half the pay-per-view buys that De La Hoya's fight nine months earlier with Felix Trinidad did. During that nine-month span, much of the seamy underbelly of boxing was exposed, and, apparently, the buying public didn't like what it saw.

The numerous allegations included the following:

•Arum said he paid $100,000 to Lee through boxing manager Stan Hoffman for the purpose of getting Schulz ranked to fight Foreman in 1995 in Las Vegas. The deal was for $200,000, but Arum said he didn't pay the second $100,000 when he learned Lee Sr. had also solicited money from Foreman.

•Kushner said he was routinely shaken down for payments, ranging from $2,500 to $10,000 over a seven-year period from 1987 through 1994.

•Duva said he had to pay $25,000 to get Fernando Vargas the number-one spot in the IBF's 154-pound division.

•Former light heavyweight champion William Guthrie testified that a title shot he was due was delayed when he decided to renege on a promotional agreement with King.

With all of this testimony and more, a conviction seemed like a slam dunk. But the defense managed to score points by arguing that Doug Beavers, the former IBF ratings chairman who became a government informant and caught Lee on tape accepting payments, kept the money he received for himself.

In one instance, Beavers testified that he delivered a bag filled with $100 bills to Robert W. Lee Jr., who was also on trial but was acquitted of all charges, on the New Jersey Turnpike. The point of that testimony was to show that Lee Jr. actively participated in the scheme. Jurors, however, said they did not believe that Beavers passed the money on to Lee Jr., and suggested he kept it for himself. Jurors also said they were troubled by the fact that Beavers testified with a grant of immunity from the government. Arum, Kushner, and Duva testified for the government even though they did not have immunity.

Arum's testimony brought him nothing but trouble. He was called in front of the Nevada State Athletic Commission shortly before the trial wrapped up and fined $125,000 and given six months probation as a result of his testimony, which they felt brought discredit to the sport. Kushner and Duva may soon face similar fates, though neither promoter does nearly as much business in Nevada as does the Las Vegas-based Top Rank.

Aside from America Presents, King was the only major American promoter not to admit to a role in paying for rankings. He said he had done nothing wrong and was hoping for an acquittal for Lee.

King was upset when the jury found Lee guilty on six counts—"I hated to see that because he's a good man and he deserved to be acquitted," King said—but he chastised Arum for his decision to testify for the government.

Arum characterized his testimony as "courageous." He said he voluntarily gave the information to the FBI when it began an investigation into the case and said he

believes the FBI would never have known. Arum said he cooperated with the government at every stage of the investigation and thought he deserved credit for what he termed "my one mistake." *(Editor's note: It should not be forgotten, however, that in the May 1983 issue of* THE RING, *Arum admitted making payoffs to Pepe Cordero, whom the promoter described as the WBA's bagman. "It's bulls___ that I control the WBA," said Arum. "When I want something done, I have to pay off Cordero ... To get [Ray] Mancini a title shot, we had to pay Pepe Cordero hundreds of thousands of dollars." )*

King, however, scoffed at Arum and said Arum shouldn't have testified to begin with.

"He's going to try to make himself a hero for being a rat fink," King said. "You can't be no hero being a rat fink. You know how you be the hero? Don't participate in rat fink-ism."

Arum said he regretted making the payment to Lee, though it was not clear that Lee ever received the money. Bank records never showed the money coming out of Hoffman's account, though Hoffman testified he paid it to Lee over the years in pieces.

But Arum said the acquittal on the racketeering charges showed how difficult it is to clean up the sport. The sanctioning bodies play such a prominent role, he said, because there is no regulation of them, and it will be even harder to crack down on the WBA (Venezuela) and WBC (Mexico) because they're not based in the U.S. The IBF, for its part, seems to be on the way to increased reputability with Hiawatha Knight acting as its new president, but it will take some time before any level of public trust can really be expected. The Nevada commission is considering requiring the sanctioning bodies to be licensed to stage fights in Nevada. Arum said that would be the only way to reign them in and gain control of the sport.

"There have been many things over the years we went to the commission about regarding the sanctioning bodies, but the answer was always the same: 'They're not our licensees, so we don't have any jurisdiction over them,'" Arum said. "At least if they were licensed, there would be some minimum standards they would be required to meet."

Arum said the Nevada commission was unable to take action several years ago when WBA supervisor Jimmy Binns sat at the scorer's table only days after testimony in a state court from John Davimos that Binns had tried to shake him down for money from former heavyweight champion Michael Moorer, whom Davimos managed.

"This was testified to in open court in front of a judge [Donald Mosley], and then this guy [Binns] was allowed to sit at the scorer's table?" Arum said. "That's what is ludicrous in this situation."

The fallout from the trial, though, figures to be great and should have a wide-ranging impact upon the sport.

In Nevada, commission member Dr. Flip Homansky said gaining control of the sanctioning bodies would be one of his priorities. He said he was disturbed by what went on in the IBF trial and said such actions harm boxing. Homansky said Nevada needs to take an active role in finding a solution to the problems that plague the sport, particularly those relating to the sanctioning bodies.

"I'm not sure what the answer is, but I'm pretty sure the system we're working

*(Continued on page 95)*

# KEEPING SCORE

*As in most major trials, the verdict in the IBF racketeering case had ramifications beyond the prosecution and defense. Here are some of the winners and losers:*

**THE WINNERS**

**Don King:** The flamboyant promoter was an unindicted co-conspirator and a conviction of Lee on all counts would likely have meant charges against King, since much of the testimony implicated him. Now, that seems unlikely.

**Bob Lee:** Even though he faces up to three years in jail on the six counts he was convicted of, Lee was seen on videotape apparently accepting bribe money, yet managed to be acquitted of the most serious charges.

*Winner Goossen*

**Bob Lee Jr.:** He was acquitted of all charges.

**All current and past IBF champions:** A conviction on the racketeering charges would have sullied their titles.

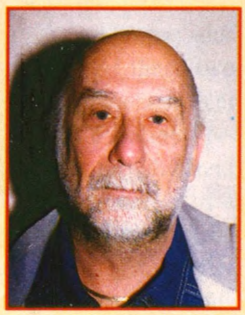
**Gerald Krovatin:** The summation of the Lees' attorney left some jurors in tears, and he managed to beat the bulk of the government's case despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

**Dan Goossen:** The America Presents promoter is proud of the fact that Lee and Doug Beavers are heard on one tape saying not to bother asking Goossen for a bribe because he wouldn't pay it.

**THE LOSERS**

**Bob Arum:** King's arch-rival went out on a limb, testifying without immunity that he paid Lee $100,000 in order to get a fight sanctioned. He wound up being fined and censured by the Nevada State Athletic Commission for his admission, while his antagonist, King, just laughed.

**Doug Beavers:** The former IBF ratings chairman was the government's key witness, an informant who was wired for many meetings with Lee. Jurors said they didn't believe him.



*Loser Hoffman*

**Cedric Kushner:** The promoter admitted to paying bribes over a seven-year period, which will get him in hot water with a number of state athletic commissions.

**Stan Hoffman:** Arum testified that the boxing manager was a middle man, supposedly to route the money to Lee. Bank records, though, showed most of the money never left his account.

**The Feds:** Once again, boxing reform takes a hit. A slam dunk clangs off the rim.

—KI

# VARGAS VS. TRINIDAD

## A FITTING FINALE TO A YEAR OF GREAT FIGHTS!

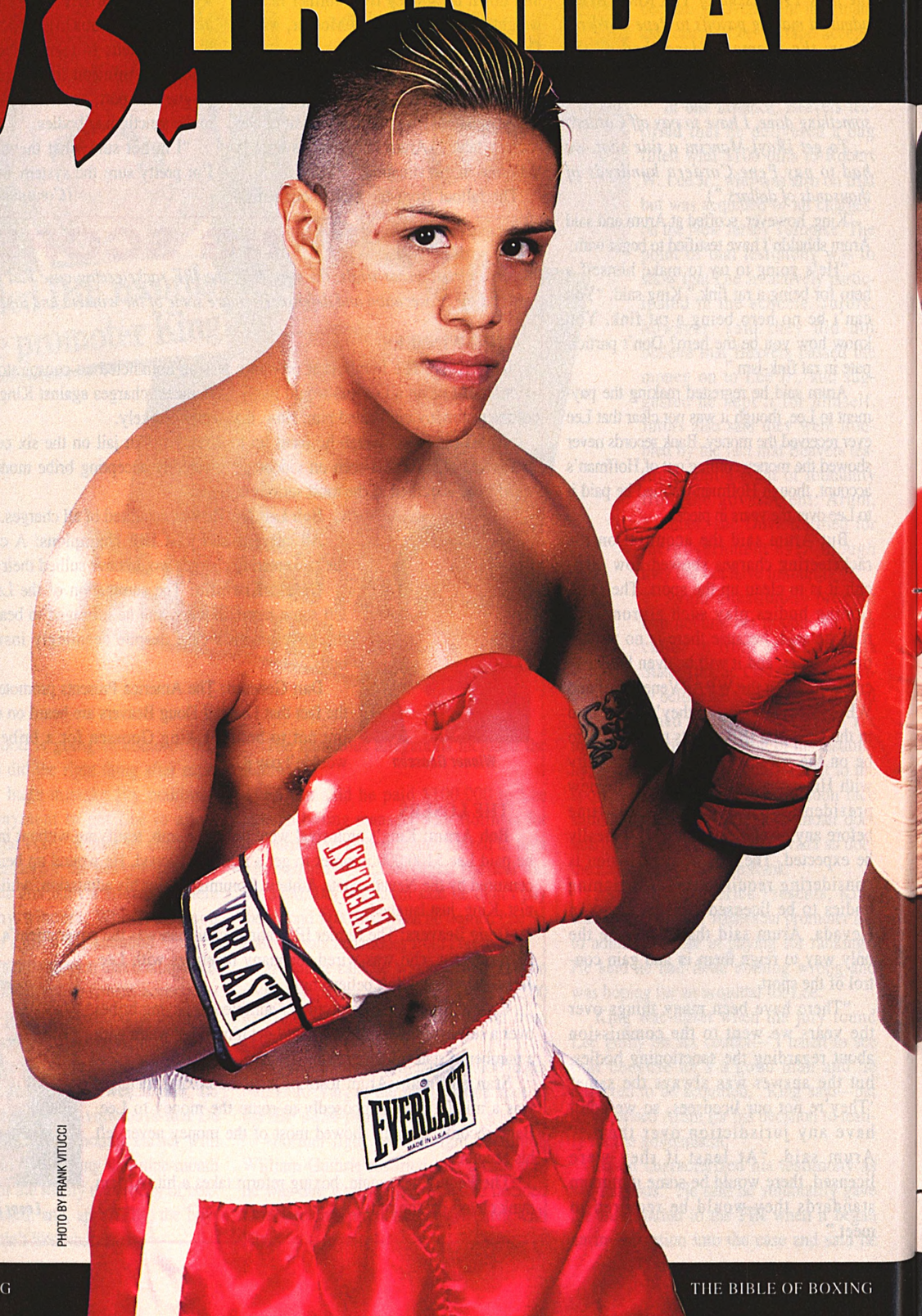



PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

PHOTO COURTESY OF HBO/TVKO

**By Nigel Collins**

Now that they have enticed him away from arch-rival Showtime, HBO has a grandiose agenda mapped out for Felix Trinidad, culminating with a superfight against Roy Jones sometime in 2001. But the cable network isn't waiting until next year to capitalize on its new deal with the WBC super welterweight champion, and has already made an attractive, early-December fight for him versus IBF counterpart Fernando Vargas.

Moreover, in a year that has been blessed by an abundance of superb fights—Erik Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera, Shane Mosley-Oscar-De La Hoya, Trinidad-David Reid, Vargas-Ike Quartey—the Vargas-Trinidad 154-pound unification could ultimately turn out to be Fight of the Year.

Not only does the bout bring together a pair of exceedingly talented, undefeated champions, it also matches two fighters currently ranked among THE RING's pound-for-pound best, both of whom are eager to move into the top spot, presently occupied by Shane Mosley.

Then there's the Mexican-Puerto Rican rivalry that always adds spice whenever the best of these two boxing-rich ethnic groups clash. Yet regardless of their shared Latino heritage, the pair project entirely different images. There's no bad guy here; just a couple of good guys with contrasting personalities. The fiery Vargas, despite his history of outside-of-the-ring scuffles, remains an engaging individual, as friendly and open as he is intense.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/ALLSPORT

*Referee Mitch Halpern calls timeout in order for David Reid to recover from one of Trinidad's low blows. Reid cautions Vargas that "Tito" will do whatever it takes to win, regardless of the rules.*

Trinidad has the laid-back, happy-go-lucky confidence of a man who's been on top for so long that he knows the only place he has to prove himself is inside the ring. But success has never made him complacent, and the responsibility of being a folk hero in his native Puerto Rico seems to buoy Trinidad rather than weigh him down.

But beyond charisma and the hype, there's really just one fundamental question to ask when trying to predict the winner: Is the 22-year-old Vargas, in just his fourth year as a pro, ready for a veteran superstar of Trinidad's caliber?

The stats say no, but this is boxing, where one well-placed punch can make a mockery of the numbers and turn the favorite into a pile of helpless muscles and bones. Even so, it would be foolish to ignore the facts. Trinidad, 38-0 (31), has had almost as many title fights (18) as Vargas, 20-0 (18), has had pro bouts. What makes Trinidad's situation even more noteworthy is that he's still only 27 years old and has had relatively few grueling battles. True, he's been knocked down numerous times, including a third-round trip to the canvas against Reid, but all of the knockdowns he's suffered have been of the one-punch variety, rather than the result of prolonged punishment.

For a fighter who has been a world champion since 1993, Trinidad is remarkably fresh, fighting as well now, if not better, than at any time during his illustrious career. Part of this can be credited to the former IBF welterweight champion's move up to the junior middleweight division after years of weakening himself struggling to make 147 pounds. Every fighter who jumps up a weight class swears he'll be better for it, but in Trinidad's case, it actually seems to be true.

Vargas is overflowing with confidence, hardly the kind of fighter who would be intimidated by Trinidad's lofty status. But steadfast self-belief won't be enough. While "Ferocious Fernando's" 12-round decision over Ike Quartey was excellent preparation for the task ahead, Trinidad is a far more demanding chal-

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/ALLSPORT

*Knockout comparison: Both Trinidad and Vargas have stopped hard-hitting Yory Boy Campas, but the Mexican brawler was in his prime when Tito came off the deck to TKO him in 1994 (pictured).*

lenge than the former WBA welterweight champion from Ghana.

While there's no denying that "Tito's" propensity for hitting the deck has given him an air of vulnerability, being inside the ring with him presents an entirely different view. If there's one person who knows exactly what Vargas is up against, it's Reid, Vargas' teammate at the 1996 Olympics, who was also on the fast track to superstardom when Trinidad administered an unpleasant dose of reality in March.

"I think Fernando, being faster, has a great chance of beating Trinidad," said Reid, whom Trinidad knocked down four times en route to winning a 12-round decision and the WBA belt. "But he has to stay

## FERNANDO SHOWS ROSS WHO'S "BOSS"

The one thing Felix Trinidad doesn't want to do is make Fernando Vargas angry. Mandatory IBF challenger Ross "The Boss" Thompson tried that two days prior to his match with Vargas at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, and it backfired to the tune of a $10,000 fine from the Nevada boxing commission and a fourth-round TKO defeat compliments of Vargas.

"It's a rage built up in me from the disrespect I've been getting," said Thompson of the wild melee he initiated by hitting Vargas in the mouth at the final prefight press conference. Vargas responded by knocking Thompson off the dais with a left hook, but the challenger from Buffalo, New York, wasn't finished. Before security guards restored order, he jumped up and bloodied promoter Gary Shaw's mouth with another right hand.

"I'm going to definitely hurt him," said a seething Vargas. "I'm going to punish him."

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/ALLSPORT

*Referee Joe Cortez rescues Ross*

Vargas, 153, Oxnard, California, did as promised, though he had to digest a few shots from Thompson, 153½, before taking over the fight in the third. The first two rounds were fairly close, and Thompson, fighting in the manner of a second-rate Roy Jones, managed to reach Vargas' head and body with leaping punches.

After a couple of even exchanges to start the third, Vargas drilled his adversary with a right to the head, and when Thompson turn away to avoid further punishment, "Ferocious Fernando" chopped away at the back of his neck with rabbit punches. Referee Joe Cortez (USA), who had warned Vargas for the same infraction in the second round, stopped the action and deducted a point.

The penalty seemed to fire up Vargas even more, and he tore into Thompson and decked him for the first time with a left-right to the head. Thompson scrambled up quickly, but there were only 15 seconds left in the round when action resumed. Still, it was long enough for the swarming Vargas to put Thompson down again with a barrage of blows just as the bell rang.

The one-minute rest period was not sufficient for Thompson, 27, to clear his head, and Vargas, 22, came out gunning for the finish in the fourth. He drove Thompson across the ring, dropped him a third time with another one-two, and then hovered over him in a taunting manner. After Cortez pulled Vargas away, Thompson got up yelling insults. But words were not going to hold off the rampaging champion. He punched Thompson, 24-4-1 (16), into the ropes, and when the groggy fighter tried to hide behind his upraised gloves, Vargas deftly knocked one glove down with his left to create an opening and plastered his man with a right that froze him to the ropes. The ensuing unanswered volley was enough to prompt Cortez to call a halt at the 1:07 mark.

"Who's the bum now?" yelled Vargas in reference to Thompson's prefight evaluation of him. But the mood soon turned mellow, and there were no further altercations at the postfight press conference, where both fighters embraced.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Main Events
(8-27-00) —NC

focused and not make any mistakes, because nobody can take the kind of left hook Trinidad hit me with in the seventh round.

"Trinidad is deceiving; he gets stronger in the late rounds. But the main thing Fernando has to remember about Trinidad is that he's a very dirty fighter. He does whatever he has to do to win—hit you in the cup, hit you on the break, use his elbows, whatever it takes, which is what a great champion is supposed to do."

Vargas isn't shy about bending the rules himself, as was evident in his recent bout with Ross Thompson *(see sidebar on page 39)*. Still, it's unlikely that the Vargas-Trinidad showdown will hinge on illegal tactics. On the other hand, it could, as Reid ventured, come down to "who catches who first" with a big shot. If Vargas, an excellent finisher, can continue the tradition of dropping Trinidad during the early going, we can be reasonably sure that he won't allow the opportunity to evaporate by easing up, which is what Reid did after putting Tito on his knees with a straight right. Conversely, a reckless all-out assault could leave Vargas open to a fight-ending counter. Even though Vargas' 90-percent knockout ratio is eight points higher than Trinidad's, Tito is the harder one-shot puncher.

Having seen how both Oscar De La Hoya and Reid got off to early leads against Trinidad by using quickness and boxing smarts, Vargas would do well to adopt a similar fight plan. But he can't afford the sort of late-round fade that led to De La Hoya and Reid's defeats.

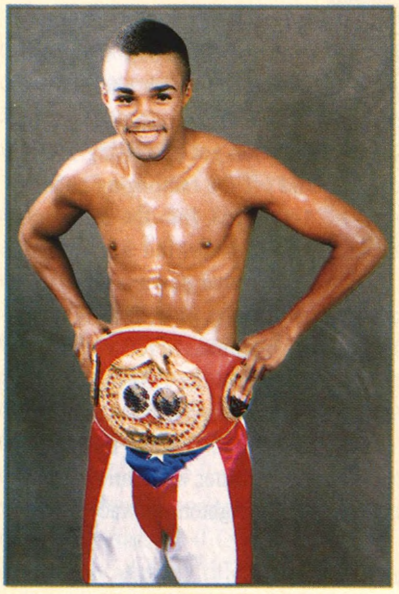
Trinidad, meanwhile, will have to get his attack untracked earlier than he usually does, and not just to avoid falling behind on the cards. He also needs to prevent Vargas from finding his boxing rhythm, and the best way to accomplish that is to jump on him from the get-go. Tito failed to do that against Reid and De La Hoya, and was behind on the cards at the halfway point.

The comparisons with Reid, however, are only valid up to a point. While their backgrounds and experience levels are similar, Vargas' professional development has been much smoother than Reid's, which has been hampered by uneven performances and a series of eye surgeries. Therefore, we have to look elsewhere in order to broaden the scope of our inquiry.

Vargas and Trinidad have had two common opponents: Yory Boy Campas and Anthony Stephens. Trinidad suffered knockdowns against both before bouncing back to stop them in the fourth and 10th rounds, respectively. Vargas also struggled with Stephens before halting him in the fifth, but dominated Campas to win the IBF title via seventh-round TKO. Even so, it would be unwise to put too much emphasis on the fact that Vargas had an easier time with Campas than Trinidad did. Yory Boy was at his peak when he clashed with Tito in 1994, but the wear and tear of another four years of face-first brawling had taken a lot out of the Mexican slugger by the time Vargas caught up with him in '98.

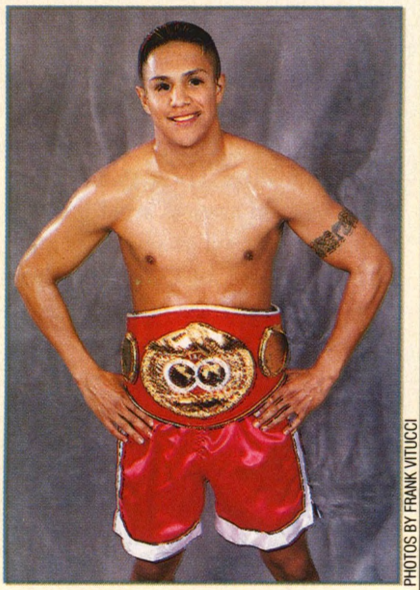
With so many physical factors counterbalancing each other, it's important to also look at the intangibles, including the rivals' mindsets. For Vargas, the Trinidad bout represents what could very well turn out to be his career-defining fight. For Trinidad, Vargas is just an obstacle he has to clear in order to reach Jones and what figures to be the biggest purse of his career. But that doesn't necessarily mean Trinidad will be looking past Vargas. Tito has always approached every fight, even those against such no-hopers as Mahenge Zulu, Hugo Pineda, and Mamadou Thiam, with a thoroughly professional attitude, and there's no reason to think he's about

## THE TALE OF THE TAPE



FELIX TRINIDAD

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 27 | AGE | 22 |
| 154 | WEIGHT | 154 |
| 5'10" | HEIGHT | 5'10" |
| 74" | REACH | 71" |
| 39½" | CHEST (normal) | 37½" |
| 42½" | CHEST (expanded) | 40½" |
| 14½" | BICEPS | 14" |
| 11½" | FOREARM | 11" |
| 32" | WAIST | 32" |
| 21½" | THIGH | 19½" |
| 15½" | CALF | 12" |
| 16" | NECK | 16" |
| 6¼" | WRIST | 7" |
| 11¾" | FIST | 11" |



FERNANDO VARGAS

PHOTOS BY FRANK VITUCCI

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/ALLSPORT

*"Ferocious Fernando" lived up to his nickname against Ross Thompson, taunting his challenger after one of his three knockdowns en route to a fourth-round TKO victory. Vargas even admitted to spitting at Thompson after one of the knockdowns.*

to start doing otherwise, especially against an ambitious young stud like Vargas.

But if Trinidad *is* looking past Vargas, it won't be in the direction of Jones, but rather at the scales. Apparently, Trinidad is already outgrowing his new division, and has made it clear that, regardless of the outcome, the Vargas fight will be his last at 154 pounds. Win, lose, or draw, Tito will step up to middleweight, presumably against either WBA titlist William Joppy or WBC champ Keith Holmes, as both, like Trinidad, are promoted by Don King.

"If Vargas wins, we're not going to see Vargas-Trinidad II," said HBO's Seth Abraham. "Don Felix [Trinidad's trainer-father] believes Felix's natural weight is somewhere between 160 and 170. And Roy has already agreed to fight him at 170."

While Abraham believes that Jones-Trinidad would still be a meaningful fight if Trinidad loses to Vargas, there's no question a defeat at the hands of the cocky kid from Oxnard, California, would strip the match of much of its luster. Besides, from a spectator's point of view, Vargas-Trinidad will probably prove to be a far more rousing encounter than Trinidad-Jones. Not only does it figure to be added to the short list of Fight of the Year candidates, the winner has a damned good shot at being Fighter of the Year. And with all of that going for it, who needs Roy Jones? ■

## TRINIDAD-VARGAS: STAFF PICKS

**Nigel Collins:** Trinidad KO 10

"Vargas' machismo won't allow him to stick and move all night. At some point, he's going to get into an exchange, and that's when Trinidad's punching power will take over."

**Eric Raskin:** Vargas KO 9

"Both fighters tend to be patient and cautious even against unthreatening opposition, so expect it to take about four or five rounds to really heat up. But once it does, Trinidad's shaky chin will prove the difference."

**Joe Santoliquito:** Vargas W 12

"Vargas was thought to be too young to challenge Yory Boy Campas and surprised everyone. He wasn't supposed to be able to withstand the power of Quartey, and he looked even better. I think it's time we stop doubting Vargas' talent. Besides, all the incentive is on Vargas' side. A convincing victory over Trinidad would be the ultimate insult to his pal, Oscar De La Hoya."

**Jeff Ryan:** Trinidad KO 8

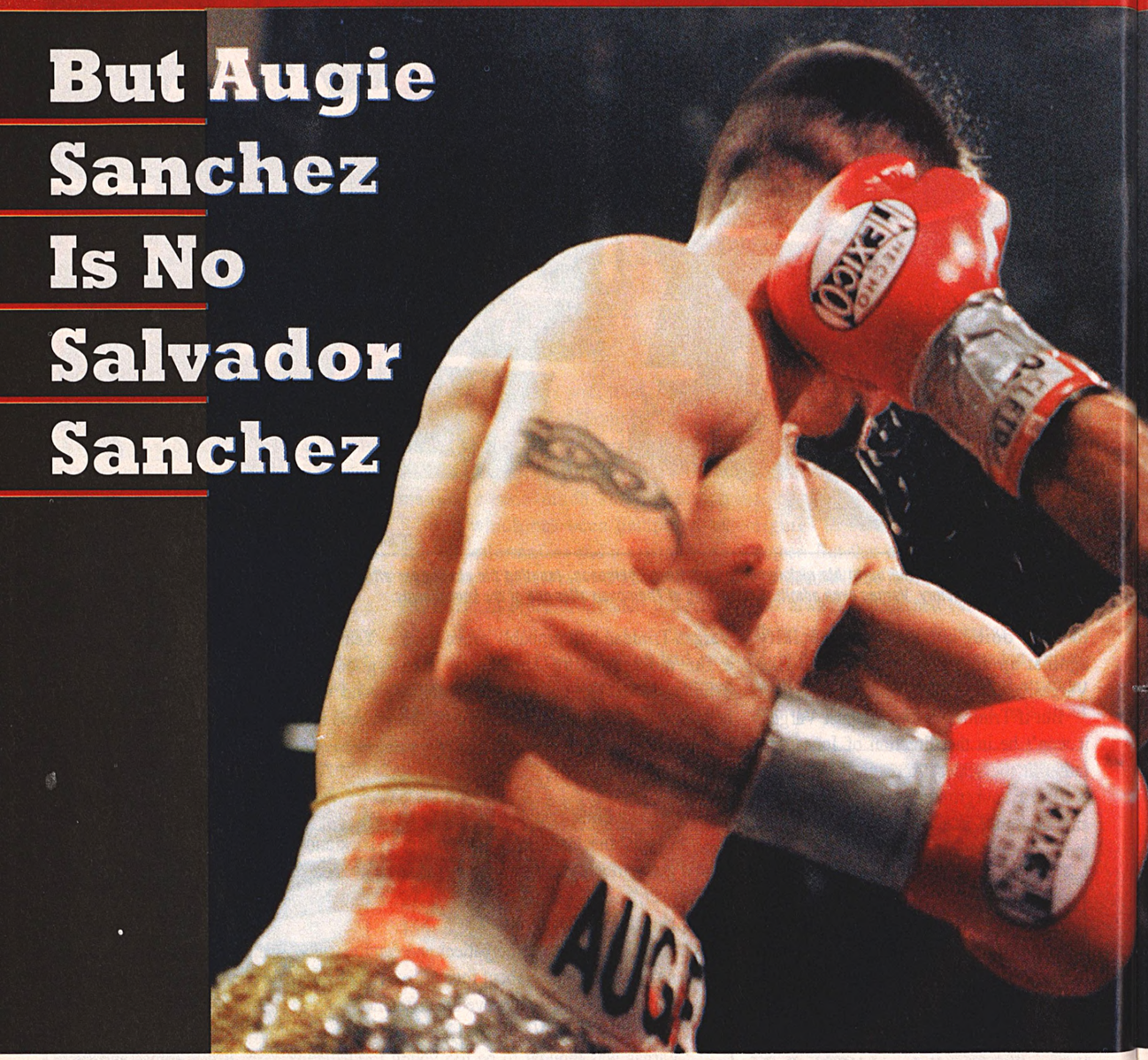
"The disputed win over De La Hoya and impressive thrashing of David Reid have given Trinidad more confidence than he's possessed in years. That, combined with his polish and edge in power and experience, add up to an eighth-round stoppage. The only thing Vargas will be spitting in this fight is blood."

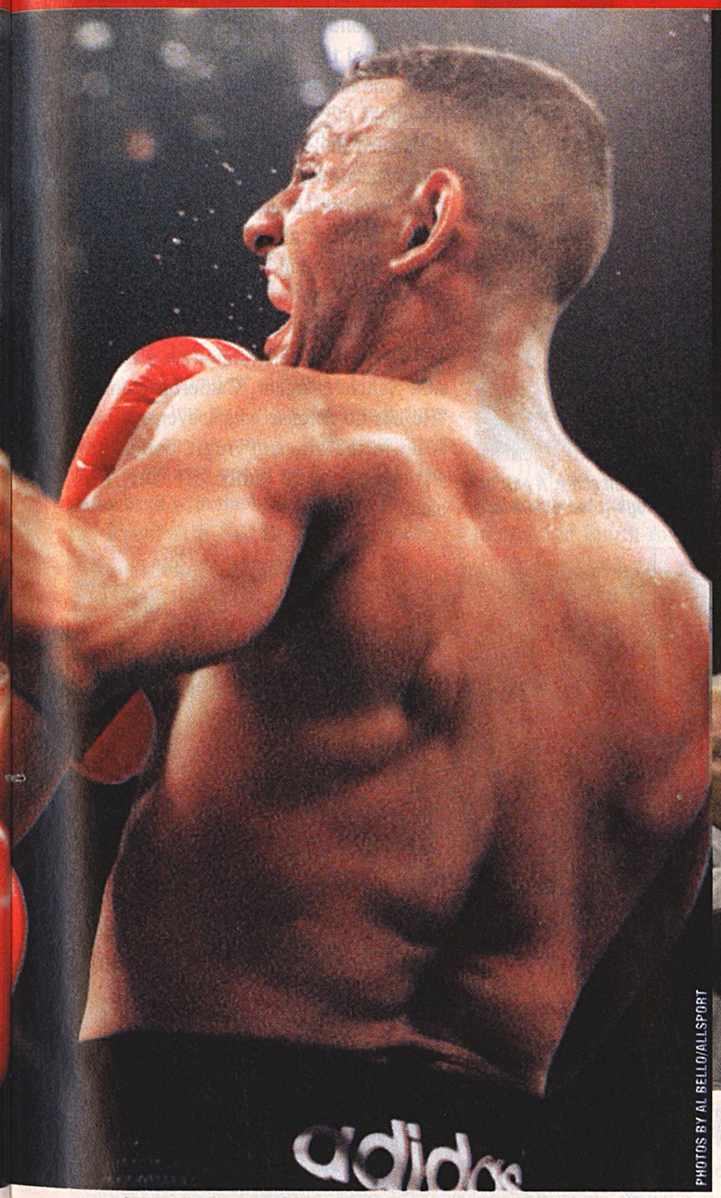
**William Dettloff:** Vargas W 12

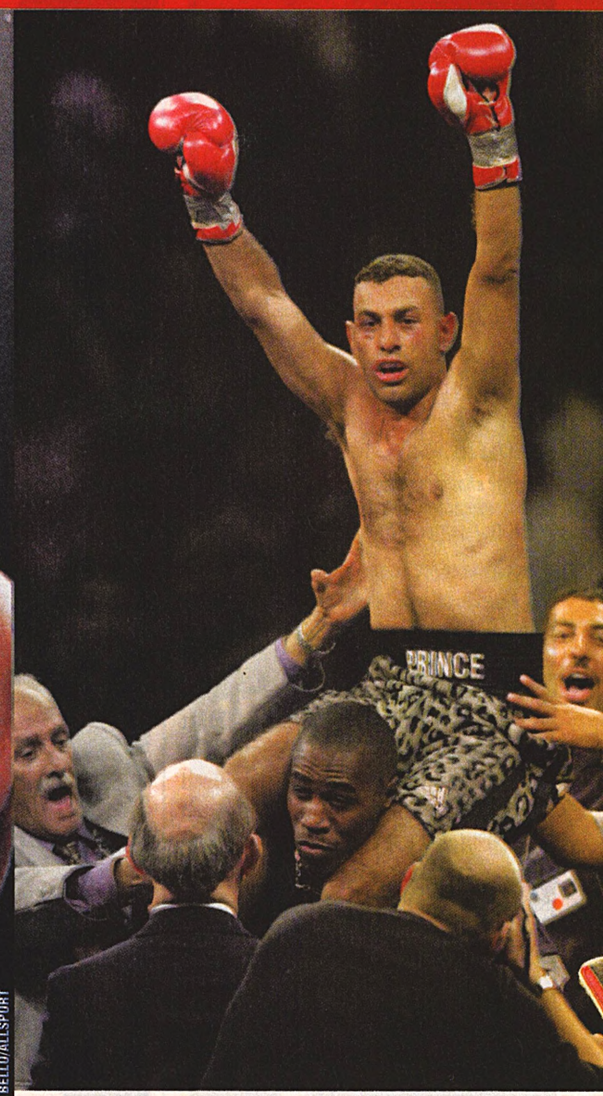
"If Vargas can box as well as De La Hoya did against Trinidad, and I think he can, he should take a unanimous but close decision in a controlled fight."

# HAMED HOMES IN ON ALL-TIME GREATNESS

## But Augie Sanchez Is No Salvador Sanchez







PHOTOS BY AL BELLO/ALLSPORT

*Although it was tougher than expected, Hamed's punching power finally proved too much for game underdog Augie Sanchez. The fourth-round knockout victory ran "The Prince's" record to 35-0 (31), but doubts remain concerning his place in history.*

**By Ted Bodenrader**

The "hit" was on. The Soprano Family spilled into the dark setting of the Fox Arena—Tony, Junior, Johnny, and the rest of them—all awaiting the moment of a quick and subtle assassination. The boiling tension mounted as the lights dimmed and the HBO cameras began to roll. The air was filled with a collective thirst for ripping violence.

Sure enough, about a half-hour later, Augie Sanchez departed the grim scene in a horizontal posture, as medics carried away the stretcher supporting his lithe frame. All the while, the surrounding witnesses marveled tastelessly at the horrific display they had just witnessed.

The hit was a successful one. It wasn't, however, delivered with the slick, quiet efficiency of most mob-style executions. Prince Naseem Hamed's vicious fourth-round knockout of Sanchez was about as subtle as an urban drive-by shooting, a massacre that could have easily headlined your six o'clock newscast.

When the hubbub had subsided and Sanchez was safely awake again, the questions rifled back and forth through the arena like errant machine gun spray. Was England's cocky half-pint assassin really a bona fide hit in today's boxing racket? Or was he merely a low-level hit man, wiping up the streets of the lesser featherweight hopefuls who got in his way?

Does he belong in the same ring with heavy-hitting Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera? And if so, does he belong in the same sentence as greats like Kid Chocolate, Willie Pep, Sandy Saddler, and Salvador Sanchez?

While the mainstream fanatics took in a night of wild entertainment, complete with acrobats, wisecracks, and senseless gyrations, the grizzled old-schoolers pondered Hamed's place among the all-time great featherweights. It was clear in this day and age that Hamed's Hollywood flash seemed more fit for Johnny Depp than Willie Pep.

"Back in the day, Hamed would have been nothing more than an above-average clubfighter," said Sal Gulla, a veteran New England trainer who lived through the eras of many 126-pound dynamos. "He gets a lot of attention for all this other crap he does, the dancing and the circus act stuff. But Pep would have boxed his ears off. Sandy Saddler, Kid Chocolate, and Henry Armstrong? They would have cleaned his clock, too."

Hamed's give-and-take struggle with Sanchez, a 22-year-old unproven from Las Vegas, left few to doubt his vivid flaws. They were flaws that were first exposed in December 1997, when Hamed's spaceship landed in the corner of Madison Square Garden for his highly publicized American debut. Hamed also landed on

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/ALLSPORT

*Sanchez showed no fear of Hamed and managed to tag him with a number of clean shots. A pair of rights appeared to floor The Prince in the second, but referee Michael Ortega ruled otherwise. Later, Naz admitted that he was indeed knocked down.*

the canvas three times—hardly the spectacle American fans were expecting—when former champion Kevin Kelley cast new light on Naz' faulty game.

The slipshod performance against Kelley left lingering doubts about Hamed's chin, balance, and defensive tactics. They were doubts that remained over the five fights that followed, when Hamed picked apart an old vet (Wilfredo Vazquez), a light-hitting totem pole (Wayne McCullough), a game but outgunned scrapper (Paul Ingle), a uninspired plodder (Cesar Soto), and a used-up junior featherweight (Vuyani Bungu) with little resistance in return, though Ingle did give him a bit of slight shock in the later rounds. Hence, the effectiveness of the work in progress by trainer Emanuel Steward, who joined the Hamed camp midway through last year, was still left in question.

It wasn't until the second round of his unexpected scare from Sanchez that the worldwide jury tuned in to judge Hamed for charges of impersonating a great featherweight champion. While Naz slithered out in the first round in a sly, stalking posture, Sanchez in the second round found a need for speed, an ingredient that spells trouble for the short, power-punching Hamed.

A booming right hand from Sanchez rocketed off Hamed's skull and dropped the 5'3" Brit for the first time since the Kelley fight, even though referee Michael Ortega mistakenly ruled it was a slip.

With welts marking Hamed's eyes and forehead only six minutes into the fight, Sanchez followed up with a stinging flurry in the third that wobbled Naz against the ropes and had the Hamed haters in a gleeful uproar.

Hamed flailed back with wild, looping shots and unwisely exposed his chin for quick Sanchez counters, openings that the youngster capitalized on. As the blood began to seep out of Hamed's battered nose, so did the hope of invincibility for the showman from Sheffield.

"Augie exposed Hamed as a fraud," said Sanchez' agent, Cameron Dunkin. "He has no defense whatsoever, his chin is up in the air, and Augie nailed him with some good shots. He hurt him badly."

PHOTO BY EZRA SHAW/ALLSPORT

*Once Naz found the range for his heavy artillery, it was all downhill for Sanchez. But beating longshots has done little to enhance Hamed's all-time rating among featherweight greats.*

However, when the punches started to sting and the blood began to flow, Hamed abruptly turned from a showman to a professional hit man. Hamed wisely lured the young, unknowing Sanchez into a deadly and dangerous territory that few have walked safely away from.

While the defensive flaws were certainly there, there was one glowing truth that sung louder than anything Steven Tyler, sitting ringside, ever belted out: Nobody in the sport can punch like Prince Naseem Hamed.

"He's got pound-for-pound the best punch in the sport, no questions asked," conceded Gulla. "People talk about the power of [Felix] Trinidad and [Lennox] Lewis and some of the other big hitters out there, but this kid gets tremendous leverage on his punches. He generates some awesome power in those legs. He can whack with the best of them in history, even with Saddler and Salvador Sanchez and the other great punchers of the division. That's why I think that punching power puts Hamed at the top of the modern featherweights. Those guys like Azumah Nelson and Jeff Fenech, I think Hamed would beat 'em all."

In the fourth, his face bearing the effects of Sanchez' pistol-like power-shots, Hamed unleashed his power. You could surely hear Tyler's "Dream On" playing after a ferocious four-punch flurry from Hamed introduced Sanchez to La La Land and prompted Ortega to wave off the bout without missing a beat. Sanchez, who was already falling when Hamed's final, flush right crashed home, collapsed into the corner, where he'd soon be treated with oxygen before being taken to the local hospital. It was a spectacle more suited for a *Sopranos* episode. Nonetheless, it left even the most vocal of Hamed critics admitting the powerful, painful truth.

"That Hamed is a great puncher," Dunkin later said. "I don't see anyone in the division standing up to those kinds of punches."

Whether the "hit" was the kind of hit that HBO or Hamed himself was looking for is another question. Hamed's impressive fourth-round shellacking of Bungu returned him to the pound-for-pound lists, but his struggles with Sanchez leaked an avalanche of successive jeers.

In order to become just half the pugilist he claims to be—and to even be considered in the same whiff of breath as the division's all-time greats—Hamed will need to mix it up with the true threats of the division, the Barreras and Moraleses of the featherweight class.

Beyond that, a bout with Floyd Mayweather, a young thoroughbred whose blinding speed could provide a blistering nightmare, would be high in demand. It's a venture that the entire world, as well as HBO boss Seth Abraham, is growing antsy and impatient to see.

"If he was facing any more Augie Sanchezes, I would take myself on another walk around the block," said Abraham. "They're driving a Rolls Royce at 40 miles an hour, and that's a shame."

Hamed, however, talks like the driver of a nitro-

*(Continued on page 46)*

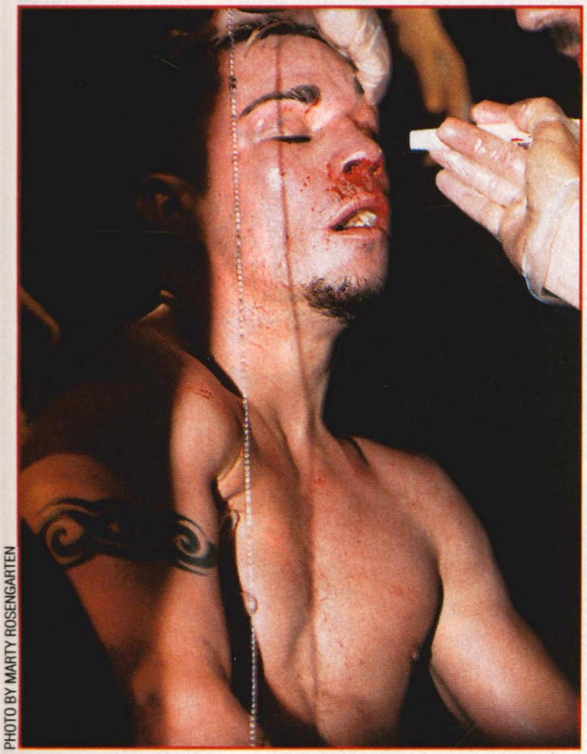


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

***The doctor peers into the eyes of a battered Sanchez, who was taken to hospital as a precautionary measure. Thankfully, he was released the same night with a clean bill of health.***

## KO-KO'S NEXT

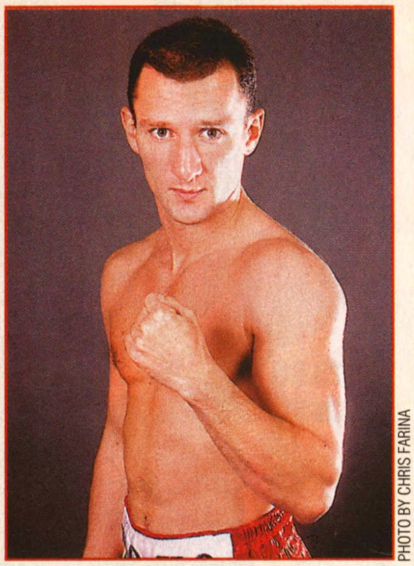


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

*Kovacs is Naz' mandatory*

The closet remains full. Depending on who you talk to, however, it could be stuffed with a variety of different fighters ranging in weight from 118 to 126 pounds. Naseem Hamed claims that chief rivals Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera are methodically ducking a risky bout with the hard-hitting, English cash cow.

"I'm still waiting for Barrera to come out of hiding, Morales from hiding," Hamed said shortly after dispatching Augie Sanchez. "I give [Sanchez] the maximum credit because he came to the table, where Barrera and Morales wouldn't."

HBO executive Seth Abraham, however, insinuates that it is Hamed hiding, and the time is now to emerge with the "S" on his chest and the cape on his back.

"He hasn't met the best fighters around, and that should be addressed immediately," Abraham said. "He needs to take risks on who he meets because he can't go on fighting the Augie Sanchezes of the world forever."

While Johnny Tapia declined an offer to fight Naz last June, Hamed's promoter Barry Hearn claims that the Anglo-Arab superstar will next face mandatory challenger Istvan "Ko-Ko" Kovacs on November 4, before pursuing a March 2001 showdown with Barrera.

"Barrera's closest now and he's the one who will sign for early-2001," Hearn told Fightnews.com. "There's no way we have avoided Barrera, Morales, or Johnny Tapia. Naz' opinion is he's the best in the world and he wants to fight them all." —TB

# Naseem Hamed

*(Continued from page 45)*

powered dragster, and he's ready to rip through the rest of the competition on American soil. It's a ride that started in December '97, but never quite hit top velocity.

"I will prove myself in America," said Hamed. "I agree that some of my performances in America, apart from having drama and excitement, have been a little under my estimation for performance."

Therefore, some people question whether Hamed will ever rank among the featherweight greats. A more fitting spot for the perennial showman may lie within the same breath as Al Capone, Jimmy Burke, and Anthony Soprano. Still, even a hit man has his orders of business to attend to, and Hamed has chalked up 35 hits in just as many tries. When it came to summing up the execution of Augie Sanchez on August 19, the world's hardest pound-for-pound puncher spoke like a true Mafia assassin.

"You know what happens when you get hit on the chin by The Prince?" asked Naz with a vengeful grin. "That's right. You get whacked." ■

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

*If Hamed wants to approach true greatness he must beat either Marco Antonio Barerra or Erik Morales, pictured slugging it out during their brutal February 2000 classic.*

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# OPPOSITES ATTRACT!

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## Is Tszyu vs. Judah A Chavez-Taylor In The Making?

**By Joe Santoliquito**

One is an old-school fighter, relying heavily on a ruthless attack, an anvil-like right hand, and a sturdy chin. The other is a manic dynamo with panther-like reflexes, evasive defensive skills, and a penchant for showboating. But while old-world warrior Kostya Tszyu and hip-hop stylist Zab Judah are as far apart as Australia and Brooklyn in their approaches to the Sweet Science, in many ways they have a lot in common. Both respect each other as champions, both have a genuine passion for boxing, and, most importantly, both are focused on becoming the *sole* ruler of the talent-laden junior welterweight division.

The target date for a Tszyu-Judah match could fall sometime in the middle of next year, possibly at Madison Square Garden, and when it happens, it promises to be the most intriguing clash the 140-pound class has seen since the first Julio Cesar Chavez-Meldrick Taylor fight. And if Tszyu-Judah turns out to be anywhere near as good as that majestic struggle, we have another classic to look forward to. The most recent performances by IBF champ Judah and WBC boss Tszyu have only heightened anticipation, and soon after Judah validated his claim to the IBF belt with a fourth-round TKO of Terronn Millett, speculation shifted into high gear.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

*After Judah defended the IBF junior welter title with a four-round blowout of formidable Terronn Millett, speculation quickly grew as to how the IBF titlist would fare against WBC counterpart Tszyu.*

While Judah supporters rave about the way he dropped Millett once in the second round and twice in the fourth, his detractors pointed to the fact that Zab also hit the canvas himself (for the second time in a three-fight span) when Millett tagged the 22-year-old from Brooklyn with a counter left in the first, sending him crashing to his knees.

Judah reacted quickly, just as he had when he'd been forced to come off the floor to win the vacant IBF title against Jan Bergman. He pummelled Millett thereafter, using his exceptional quickness to break through the challenger's defenses and score a pair of fight-ending knockdowns in the fourth round.

But despite the spectacular nature of the finish, questions remain about Judah, most of them having to do with his proclivity for being knocked down by fighters vastly inferior to Tszyu. Critics can't help wondering what would happen if Tszyu tagged him the way Bergman and Millett did.

"I haven't seen the tape of the Millett-Judah fight, but I think Zab would get up the first time if I hit him, but not the second," said Tszyu, who spoke to THE RING from his home in Sydney, Australia. "Millett is big puncher, but he has differ-

PHOTO BY M. DAVID LEEDS/ALLSPORT

*The big question surrounding a Tszyu-Judah showdown is whether or not Judah could withstand Tszyu's powerpunches. Tszyu recently displayed his firepower with a sixth-round kayo of washed-up Mexican legend Julio Cesar Chavez. "I think my power comes from the mind," said Tszyu.*

ent power than I have. I will take my time. Sometimes I don't like to knock down my opponents in the first round, because I start chasing them harder than I should. Many people hear about my power, but still don't understand what kind of power I have and what damage I can make on people. If they make a mistake, it's too late.

"Zab's a young fighter who is very entertaining and he enjoys what he's doing. He has good punching power and good speed, but he doesn't have a very good chin. Zab has a big heart. He's someone people want to see. It's a great fight. But first, we need to make sure our profiles are increased and make sure people want to see this fight."

In order to increase his marquee value, Judah will probably be showcased on the Mike Tyson-Andrew Golota pay-per-view card in the fall. And while further exposure to the paying public will help sell tickets for an eventual Tszyu-Judah fight, additional seasoning for the brash American is also desirable.

Even though he still has a lot of growing up to do, Judah showed how much he'd matured in his first title defense, against Junior Witter, June 24, in Glasgow, Scotland. The slick southpaw's patience was strained considerably by the fleet-footed and awkward Witter, who employed Naseem Hamed-like tactics, minus the punching power. A year ago, Judah may have grown so frustrated with Witter that he might have done something foolish and gotten himself disqualified. But he bided his time, absorbed what his father/trainer, Yoel Judah, told him between rounds, and went out and executed those directives. Normally easily excitable, Judah stayed cool against a baffling adversary and coasted to a unanimous decision victory.

"I sense myself getting older and more mature," said Judah, "and I think that Junior Witter fight proved a lot. It showed that I can be patient and that I'm listening to what my corner is telling me. The Witter fight showed I can adapt to anything."

Of course, there's a world of difference between Tszyu and anybody Judah has faced in his brief pro career. But, as Judah is quick to remind everyone, he was undefeated as an amateur against European opponents. He insists Tszyu's straight-forward Eastern European approach is custom-made for him—and it's not as if Tszyu is the only one with knockout power.

"What about my punch?" Judah countered when asked about Tszyu's power. "I knocked down Terronn Millett. Can I punch? *Can I punch?* You drop me, you have problems on your hands. I have a defense, and you can't knock out anything if you can't hit it. Tszyu can't hit me. He's too slow. Don't get me wrong, I respect everyone, and especially anyone who's a champion. I

respect Tszyu; he's a fighter. Tszyu and me have a lot in common. We both love boxing, we're both world champions. But I want to be recognized as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world. I want to be on the cover of magazines by myself, not sharing the cover with someone else.

"I'm so confident, I'd like to make this fight a winner-takes-all fight. For those who want to bet against me, they can hit me on my Web site. I'll take all bets."

Putting your money on an ultra-talented fighter like Judah would ordinarily be a safe bet, but Tszyu is no ordinary opponent. In his second WBC title defense, he easily vanquished the legendary but shopworn Chavez via sixth-round stoppage. Tszyu scored a knockdown in the sixth, putting the exhausted Chavez on the canvas for only the second time in his career. Even though the fight was marred by Chavez' absurd number-one ranking, to Tszyu's way of thinking it was just another day on the job.

"Whoever they place in front of me, I'll fight them," said the Russian expatriate, who plans to work with both the Australian and Russian boxing teams at the Olympic Games in Sydney. "I was very pleased the way I fought against Chavez. I enjoyed that I didn't rush, that everything came as planned. I really improved my defense and I just destroyed him very easily.

"I believe that I'm the best guy in the division, but I believe the *real* world champion has all the titles in one hand. In my division, I think you can say Zab Judah is the second best after me. Sharmba Mitchell is a good fighter. The only fighter that matters to me is number one. I don't worry about anyone. My punches are very hard. I think I'm the hardest puncher, not only in my class, but a few other classes above me."

Tszyu has undergone a transition since his lone loss, an upset kayo defeat to Vince Phillips in 1997, which cost the pig-tailed puncher the IBF junior welter belt that's now worn by arch-rival Judah.

"I do things more professionally now," Tszyu said. "I'm learning how to make weight properly, to stay on very strict diet for eight weeks. I'm making weight so easily that maybe in the future I can write a

# ZAB CONFIRMS CHAMPIONSHIP CREDENTIALS

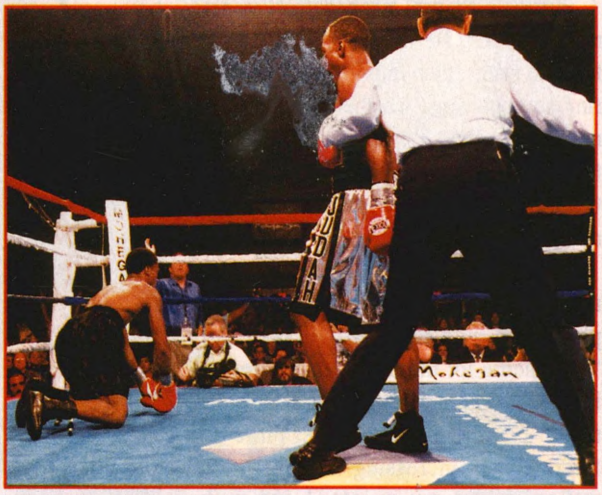

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

***Judah drops Millett a third time***

Making his second defense of the IBF junior welterweight title he won in February, Zab Judah, 138, Brooklyn, New York, proved to be a most formidable champion, regardless of the questionable manner in which he was crowned. Terronn Millett, 139, St. Louis, Missouri, had held the title before him, but had injured his right hand while making his first defense, against Virgil McClendon in July 1999. When the hand took longer than usual to heal, Millett was erroneously stripped, and the IBF sanctioned a bout between Judah and lightly regarded Jan Bergman for the vacant title.

Whatever doubts skeptics might have had about Judah's worthiness were put to rest after he survived a first-round knockdown and then punished Millett, 32, until the fight was stopped at 2:47 of the fourth round at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut.

Southpaw Judah roared out of his corner at the opening bell and immediately stunned the shorter and slower Millett with a series of blinding combinations. Millett, however, weathered the initial onslaught and dropped the rampaging Judah with a textbook left hook that landed square on the jaw. To his credit, Judah got up and won the remainder of the round.

Millett, who had no answer for Judah's speed, was felled once in the second by a left hook to the chin, and twice more in the fourth by a dizzying assortment of punches from the champion's formidable repertoire. After the final knockdown, referee Michael Ortega (USA) asked Millett to walk toward him, but the ex-champion did so on unsteady legs, and the ref wisely called a halt.

Judah, who is being touted as a fledgling superstar, raised his record to 24-0 (18) with 1 no-contest, while Millett went back to work at his family's furniture business with a record of 22-2-1 (17). He claimed he wasn't surprised by Judah's power, but just couldn't get untracked.

"Blame it on inactivity, or whatever, but I'm a better fighter than people saw tonight," claimed the loser. "But Judah is real fast and he can really crack. He's going to be tough for anyone to beat, even Kostya Tszyu."

What is most refreshing about Judah is the fact that he genuinely welcomes big challenges and, unlike so many of his counterparts, is eager to back up his bombast with his fists.

"Line them up," said Judah. "I've been saying all along that I'm willing to fight everybody. [WBA champ] Sharmba Mitchell, [Hector] Camacho [Jr.], Tszyu. People talk about Tszyu like he's the baddest guy out there. But styles make fights, and my style beats his style any day of the week."

Television: Showtime
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**—Robert Mladinich**

book about it. It's an interesting process. It's enjoyable to have breakfast the day of the weigh-in and come onto the scale, make weight, and still be hungry to eat again."

Tszyu's mental preparation is also much sharper. He imagines what kind of fight he wants, then imposes his will in the ring so opponents, whether they like it or not, have to fight Tszyu's fight. He said he feels more sure of himself in the ring, and that, mentally, he can break any fighter down.

"I think my power comes from the mind; you know how to connect things physically with the mind," Tszyu said. "I learned a lot through Chinese double-impact power. I learned to hit one particular place, and I hit another place differently. I'm increasing the strength of my palm and my wrists. I can make punches at different strengths. People don't think I have speed, but to connect with the power, you have to have speed. Zab will be surprised with the speed I have. Nothing much worries me about Zab."

Along with their different styles in the ring, Tszyu and Judah could not be more diametrically opposed outside of it. Tszyu is the complete opposite of the calculating assassin's persona he assumes in the ring. He undergoes an interesting balancing act at home, as father of two boisterous young sons and doting husband to his wife, Natasha, who chooses not to watch his fights anymore, staying instead in the dressing room until her husband's work is finished.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

*For the second time in a three-fight span, Judah was sent to the canvas by a counter left hook. After dominating most of the first round, Judah landed on his knees courtesy of Millett's hook to the chin.*

"I'm very cool guy and nothing can bother me, except my wife and my kids sometimes," said Tszyu with a laugh. "My one son is like me, the other is too wild to be like me."

Judah, meanwhile, has really taken to his minor celebrity status as a world champion, gladly complying with photo and autograph requests. He's even appeared in a few rap videos. And he's fully aware that a convincing victory over Tszyu will increase his star power even more and place him among the pound-for-pound elite. While conventional wisdom says Tszyu has a slight edge in power, not everybody agrees.

"The few rounds Zab has lost have come against left-hook counterpunches from Jan Bergman and Terronn Millett," said Max Kellerman, ESPN2 analyst. "Tszyu is not a sneaky kind of counterpuncher; he's a guy who throws a lot of punches and comes right at you, but Zab won't be there. I don't

PHOTO BY M. DAVID LEEDS/ALLSPORT

*This up-close view of what Tszyu looks like on the attack shows the fierce determination that is the hallmark of the WBC champion's game. But would this sort of all-out assault leave him open to Judah's counters?*

# TSZYU ENDS CHAVEZ' CAREER

A battered and forlorn Julio Cesar Chavez announced that he would retire after Kostya Tszyu pummeled him into a sixth-round TKO loss at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix, Arizona. When referee Bobby Ferrara stopped the mismatch at the 1:30 mark, some of the large Mexican and Mexican-American contingent among the near-capacity crowd of 14,100 showed their dismay by throwing debris. In a demented kind of way, it was a fitting conclusion to a fight that had been trashed from its inception.

The Nevada State Athletic Commission didn't want it in Las Vegas (the original site) and U.S. Senator John McCain unsuccessfully tried to persuade his home state from adopting it. The controversy stemmed from WBC President Jose Sulaiman allowing Chavez to retain the number-one spot in the 140-pound rankings, making the Mexican icon the mandatory challenger for the organization's super lightweight champ Tszyu, 25-1-1 (21). This was especially suspect because Chavez, 103-5-2 (87), had lost two of his last five fights, including a one-sided thrashing from journeyman Willy Wise. Sulaiman tried to justify his position, claiming critics of the fight were prejudiced against Chavez because he was Mexican, but only fools and Chavez' diehard fans saw it that way. The rest of the boxing world, painfully aware there could be only one outcome, cringed and tried to avert its eyes.

The fight went as expected, with Tszyu, Australia, using his range-finding left to spot and hit Chavez almost at will. Chavez, 140, connected with a few solid jabs in the first round, but missed with a left hook so horribly that he almost lost his balance and fell. In the second, Chavez showed flickers of his old self, tagging Tszyu, 139½, with a couple of rights and trying to lure him into an back-alley brawl. But Tszyu wasn't biting.

Chavez, 38, took a nasty hammering in the fifth round, and by the sixth, it was evident that he was desperate. The once mighty "Lion Of Culiacan" resorted to fouling, and was warned twice for hitting low before Ferrara (USA) finally took a point away. Sensing his prey was ready to go, Tszyu turned up the intensity, striking Chavez with a hard combination, followed by a vicious right that connected square on Chavez' jaw, sending the three-division former champion tumbling down sideways, finally coming to rest on all fours.

PHOTO BY M. DAVID LEEDS/ALLSPORT

*Tszyu makes easy work of Chavez*

When Chavez, bleeding from a cut on his forehead, regained his feet, Tszyu met him with another barrage. The gallant Mexican tried to fight back, only to be answered by further punishment. Chavez was trapped against the ropes and defenseless when his corner leaped onto the apron just as Ferrara stopped the fight.

"I feel very sad," a contrite Chavez said afterward. "I did the best I could, but my body just didn't have the strength. Forgive me. It's time to retire."

Admirers of the fabled warrior can only hope he means it.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(7-29-00)

**—Joseph Santoliquito**

think Zab has any problems with Tszyu.

"In fact, I think Zab is a harder puncher than Tszyu. In terms of physical strength, that's another story. Zab is still a young man, and Kostya does present physical problems because of his strength, but I wouldn't call him a great puncher. Chavez and Ahmed Santos were both in front of Kostya. Where was the spectacular knockout? Because of Tszyu's physical prowess, there is that element there that it could be a good fight. I just think Zab boxes the hell out of him."

Others believe the heavy-handed Tszyu is just the man to deflate Judah's ego and hand him his first pro loss.

"Judah would come out fast and run around—until he gets caught," said junior welterweight contender Randall Bailey. "Once Judah gets caught, Tszyu will come on and eventually knock him out. I respect Zab, but he hasn't been tested yet. Tszyu will wear him out by keeping the pressure on."

Vlad Warton, Tszyu's promoter, is hoping to finalize a Tszyu-Judah fight for next May or June at the Garden. Warton points out that there is a heavy Russian population in New York City, and Judah would naturally attract a great following from the Brooklyn area.

"I think it's as big a fight as De La Hoya-Trinidad, and can be as good as De La Hoya-Mosley, maybe even better," Warton said. "De La Hoya-Mosley went the distance, but it's hard for me to see Zab and Tszyu going the distance. Tszyu is the most powerful puncher in the division, and Zab's power derives from his speed. It's a fight fans certainly would look forward to seeing."

It might also be a fight that inexorably links Tszyu and Judah in boxing history. ■

# DEAR EVANDER,

# GET OUT!

*(Editor's Note: Regular contributor Ted Bodenrader was ringside in Las Vegas for the Holyfield-John Ruiz fight on August 12, 2000, and was so troubled by what he saw, that he decided to share his thoughts in the form of an open letter to "The Real Deal.")*

I don't know if you're much of a country-western fan, Evander, but I'm sure you know the song all too well. The following is a message that could have just as easily been penned by a famous country singer as by a much less-famous boxing scribe. Nonetheless, whether these words come from a writer from Boston, from any of your millions of worldwide fans, or from Kenny Rogers himself, you'll see that the pending theme here will remain the same.

To us, you have always represented boxing's indomitable workhorse, carrying us all uphill for an unforgettable and exciting ride. We have all seen you scale mountains that few believed could be scaled. We've seen you win battles that seemed impossible to win. We've watched you conquer missions that were deemed unconquerable.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

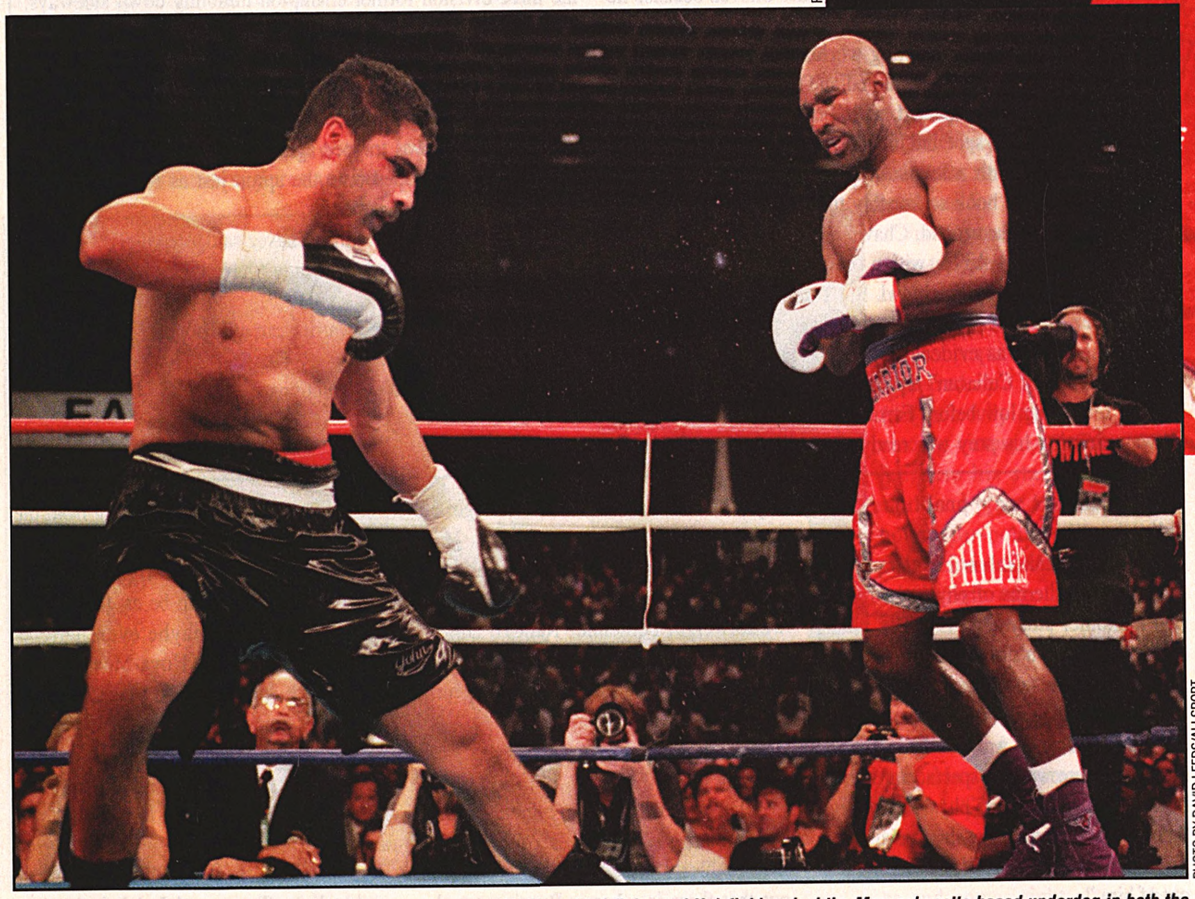


PHOTO BY DAVID LEEDS/ALLSPORT

*While many believed Ruiz deserved to win, by no means was it a one-sided fight, and Holyfield rocked the Massachusetts-based underdog in both the third and 12th rounds. The Holyfield of the past probably would have found a way to finish Ruiz off, but on this night, "The Quiet Man" got off the hook.*

*Holyfield gets rocked by a right hand en route to his controversial decision win over John Ruiz. As Holyfield nears his 38th birthday, his dulled reflexes have made fighters like Ruiz, whom he would have beaten easily a few years ago, into serious threats.*

You once became the undisputed cruiserweight champion of the world. You once became the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. You were even considered one of the sport's all-time pound-for-pound greats. Whenever the game has been muddled with trouble and turmoil, you've always come along to rescue it, rewarding the fans with enough thrills and tingles to keep it very well afloat.

In a sport littered with controversy and blatant corruption, you always represented everything that was pure and right. You've held your world championship title belts with great dignity and grace.

Nonetheless, the ride you've taken us all on has become a tad choppy. The past two years have brought on a very gradual, yet noticeable, change in your behavior both inside and outside of the ring. Little by little, fight by fight, you've been less and less of the professional prize fighter you once worked so hard to become.

It became blatantly clear the night of August 12, passing through the thousands and thousands of lever pullers, dice rollers, and poker players that inhabited the electric Paris Hotel & Casino, that you are no longer all that different from those chance-takers on the casino floor. You are

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/ALLSPORT

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

***Has Holyfield turned into a desperate, dirty fighter? A low blow in the 10th round warranted a timeout for Ruiz to recover (right), and a blatant elbow in the 12th broke Ruiz' nose (below).***

not unlike many of these delusional dream-chasers, relying on an unlikely stroke of luck to deliver them to a heavenly salvation.

It's true, Evander. You, one of boxing's greatest treasures of modern times, are becoming more and more of a professional gambler with each passing day.

Some will say that boxing and gambling are often one and the same because the risks and the rewards involved can extend drastically toward opposite extremes. There is indeed a fine line between great triumph and dark tragedy.

Yet, you always knew when to roll 'em. You rolled the dice when you moved up to a division few felt you belonged in, and you surprisingly amassed a wealth of fame, fortune, and critical praise. Your triumphs over Buster Douglas, George Foreman, and Riddick Bowe not only earned you some of life's grandest pleasures, it also earned you a precious, worldwide respect that few in boxing have been able to attain.

Your double slaying of Mike Tyson was nothing less than hitting the jackpot. When you brought the indomitable bully to his knees, your stock rocketed to an all-time high and you graced the sporting world with one of the great American feel-good tales of the decade.

But the images of you breaking down "Iron Mike," pushing him around the ring, and pulverizing him into bloody submission, were replaced by far more disturbing ones on August 12 at the Paris Ballroom. The longtime chants of approval were drowned out by the thunder of incessant boos when an unknown small-timer from Boston named John Ruiz exposed us to a faded shadow of what we once grew to love.

We watched in agony as a great fistic legend was reduced to little more than a shot clubfighter. We watched as your jaded reflexes prevented you from taking advantage of openings you would once find with considerable ease. We watched as you struggled to pull the trigger, even when the target was dangling lifelessly before you. We watched as you fought in short, ineffective spurts with long lulls of inactivity muddling your performance.

We listened to your words at the post-fight press conference. We listened to the sad and empty excuses. We listened to you as you blamed your eroding boxing ability on the fact that the other guy was a defensive fighter, merely trying to survive. We listened to your words—some of them clear, most of them slurred—and none of them were making much sense.

Lennox Lewis once called you a hypocrite in the weeks leading up to your first encounter in March 1999 on account of the numerous children you fathered out of wedlock. More recently, you countered by accusing the champion of not following the rules and regulations, thus leading to the controversial WBA-sanctioned title fight between you and Ruiz.

*Rules and regulations*, we thought, as we watched you turn your title bout with Ruiz into an alley-way mugging. A true sign of a slipping fighter is one who must revert to such shady tactics, much the way Tyson now hits after ringing bells and attempts to break arms and, as you know very well, occasionally bites ears. It is a sign of a fighter who is not only shedding his skills, but also his confidence that he can win his battles in a fair, conventional way: with his fists and his fists only.

It was difficult to watch as a true sportsman of such class and dignity reverted to the antics you pulled when things

# QUIETING THE CRITICS

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

*Ruiz' 19 horrific seconds with Tua were erased over 36 inspiring minutes with Holyfield*

"All they knew were 19 seconds—and they slept through an entire revolution."

For all his senseless banter and ridiculous chatter, Don King couldn't have summed it up any better than he did with the above sentiment about his Latino heavyweight John Ruiz.

The world only spoke of the 19 seconds back in 1996 when Ruiz—and his rising career hopes—was put to sleep by a waking giant named David Tua in quick and violent fashion. The press hounded Ruiz ever since the nightmare of years past, when 19 seconds of hell introduced him to four years of utter silence.

"The press kept reminding him of that," pointed out Evander Holyfield. "And it made him very mad."

What followed were 13 consecutive victories and then August 12's revival, when the 28-year-old Ruiz, 36-4 (27), shocked the world with what many felt was a victorious outing against the aging Holyfield. Although the judges didn't see it that way, Ruiz punished Holyfield throughout the fight with a stinging left jab, continuously outworked him on the inside, and turned the four-time champ's face into a swollen mass.

"It was like a robbery without the gun," Ruiz said. "I was very surprised at the decision. I don't know what fight the judges saw. It could have been the fight before or the fight after, but it wasn't the Holyfield fight."

Four years of boiling passion fueled Ruiz in the gutsy performance, and when a cannonball right from Holyfield in the third round threatened to return the Puerto Rican to his prior slumber, Ruiz never went down. Instead, he came to life.

The noise Ruiz has made now—through both his fists and the controversial decision—has escalated him to consideration among the division's elite. A possible rematch with Holyfield is being considered, as well as other showdowns with Tua, Lennox Lewis, and Wladimir Klitschko.

"I'll fight [Holyfield] tomorrow, yesterday, or whenever," said Ruiz. "I'll fight him on the street. He knows what happened. They came to watch Holyfield and never gave me a chance from the beginning."

If there is a rematch with Holyfield, everyone will give Ruiz an excellent chance. The boxing world has finally turned its respect and its ears to the obscure, no-name brawler from the outskirts of Boston.

"The Quiet Man" has finally spoken.

**—TB**

were not so simple with Ruiz. You butted. You shoved. You hit low. You broke Ruiz' nose with a blatant elbow in the final round.

If Richard Steele had been a law enforcement officer, he'd have been suspended for insufficient procedure. Ruiz' manager, Norman Stone, may have called it right when he said, "If [Steele] had done his job, Johnny would be the new heavyweight champion of the world." (Well, the WBA version, anyway.)

Many people will still call you "champ," many of them referring to you as "The Man" in your presence. But behind your back, Evander, these same people are calling for your immediate retirement from this brutal and taxing livelihood. They're watching you closely, Evander, and they're not really liking what they see.

In many circles, the whispers are not so silent. The concerns were floating throughout the Paris Ballroom like puffs of cigar smoke.

"He looks awful," one spectator noted.

"He doesn't even look like Holyfield," said another. "I hardly recognize him up there."

"Have your heard him lately? He's not sounding too good either."

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

*Don King lets the world know that Holyfield is now a four-time heavyweight champion, but the belt he wears is as bogus as they come. By supporting the "rules and regulations" that led to Lennox Lewis being stripped of the WBA title, Holyfield alienated a lot of fans.*

A little while later, when it was all said and done, the controversy boiled throughout the country with cries of scandal and wrongdoing. While the live version of the bout was much closer than the biased Showtime version (THE RING scored it 115-114 for Ruiz, whereas Showtime's Bobby Czyz somehow gave Holyfield only three of the 12 rounds), the worldwide consensus was that you were luckier than the number seven to escape with the unanimous decision.

Yet, at the postfight press conference, with mounds of swelling flesh covering your eyes, you reiterated that your goal is to once again become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. You speak of wanting another fight with Mike

*(Continued on page 96)*

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# THE TWENTY GREATEST MIDDLEWEIGHTS OF ALL-TIME

**By William Dettloff**

*You're a fight guy. You watch them whenever you can, you read all you can get your fingers on, and you know your stuff. Inside and out. When a boxing question pops up on* ***Who Wants To Be A Millionaire****, you get it right every time. The guy sitting next to you, the one debating with you about who the greatest middleweights are, doesn't know what you know. He thinks he does, but he doesn't. How could he say Fullmer was better than Cerdan? Is he nuts? How could he pick Monzon over Hagler? Griffith over Flowers? Please. But don't act like you don't like the debate. We know you do.*

*We like it as much as you do, so we couldn't resist putting together our selections of the 20 greatest middleweights ever. You'll find all the middleweights you know and love in here, maybe some you hate and maybe one or two you never heard of. It's all right. You'll know them when you're done.*

*Some important notes: The rankings are not based on who would have beaten whom. Rather, the placements are grounded on what the fighters achieved at middleweight: the quality of their opposition, how they fared against their contemporaries, if they were champions the number of title defenses they made, how well they performed in their biggest fights, and, perhaps most importantly, how consistent they were at the weight and for how long. That's paramount. Roy Jones, for example, doesn't make the cut because even though he was often spectacular at 160, he was off and running to 168 before we knew it. Bernard Hopkins, whom Jones beat fairly easily, does make the cut because he planted himself at 160 and got some good work done there over an extended period of time. In other words, one-hit wonders need not apply.*

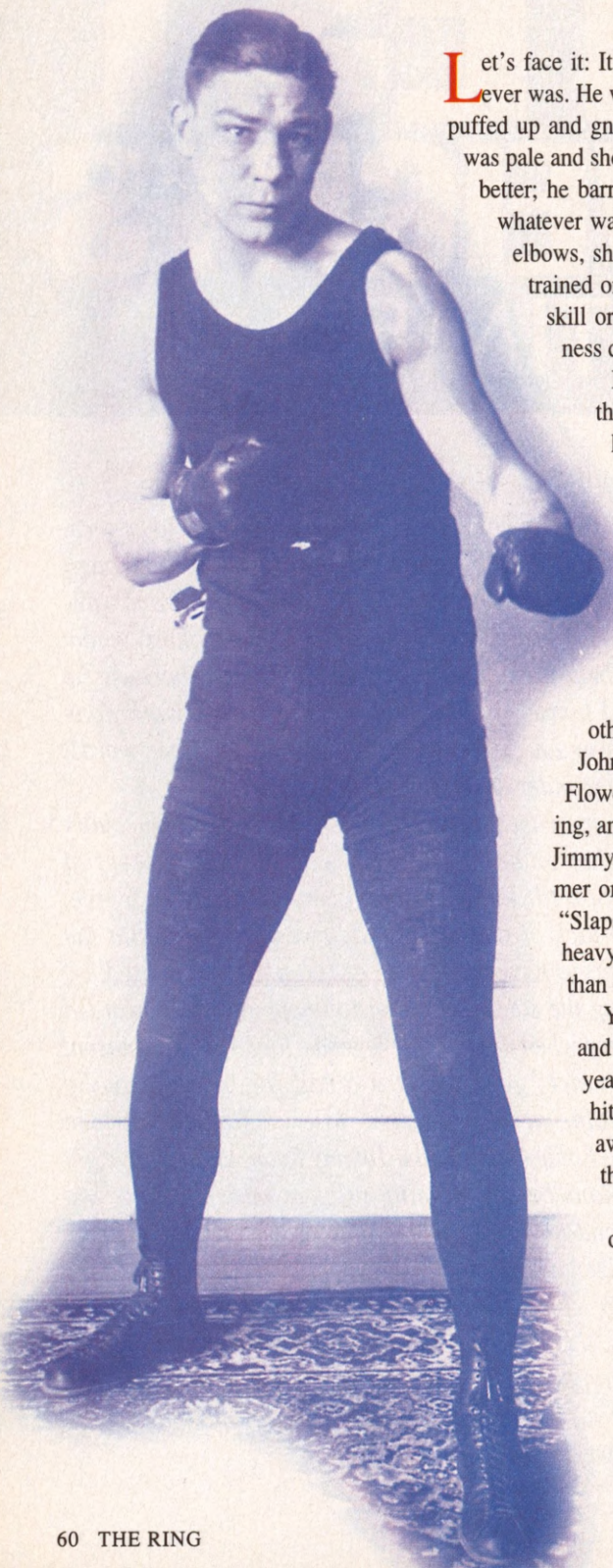
*In some cases, exemplary performance in especially big fights or an exceptionally high-quality level of opposition tilt the scale and compensate, to a degree, for the lack of advanced middleweight tenure. But the work has to have been done at 160 to be considered.*

*Along the same lines, division-hopping isn't rewarded here even when done by the legends. Sugar Ray Robinson, for instance, gets no extra credit for being virtually unbeatable at welterweight. Mickey Walker, Carmen Basilio, Emile Griffith, and Tommy Ryan, all welterweight champions before winning titles at middleweight, are rated and measured as middleweights only. Same with Dick Tiger, who went on to the light heavyweight title.*

*Even with all these rules and qualifying events and factors, this isn't scientific stuff. Records aren't perfect, perception isn't, and heaven knows we're not. We think we got it right anyway, but then, you won't know until you start reading.*

# 1 HARRY GREB

## 115-8-3 (51) with 183 no-decisions
## World Champion 1923-'26



Let's face it: It's hard to conceive of a guy like Greb as the best 160-pound fighter there ever was. He wasn't easy on the eyes, first off. His nose was beaten concave, his ears were puffed up and gnarled, and his body, though sinewy, wouldn't win any beauty contests. He was pale and short and wore a mug that screamed palooka. His style in the ring wasn't much better; he barreled forward with neither grace nor skill and hammered and hammered at whatever was in front of him, and if his fists didn't get there right or often enough, his elbows, shoulders, head, or an educated set of laces did. To complete the picture, he trained on whiskey and whores, in that order. He didn't have Sugar Ray Robinson's skill or Stanley Ketchel's power or Carlos Monzon's cool. But he got more business done at middleweight than any of them.

It's not just that Greb brutalized future heavyweight king Gene Tunney in their first match in 1922 (which actually was contested for the American light heavyweight title), or that in two of their four follow-ups he whipped the well-connected Tunney outright, but didn't get the decisions. Nor is it just that, as the lore goes, he fought the last five years of his career half-blind after Kid Norfolk detached his retina in a 10-rounder in '21. Greb is the best middleweight ever because he fought most frequently at the highest level over the longest period of time against the best competition. It arguably could be said that there has never been a more consistent fighter, at any weight.

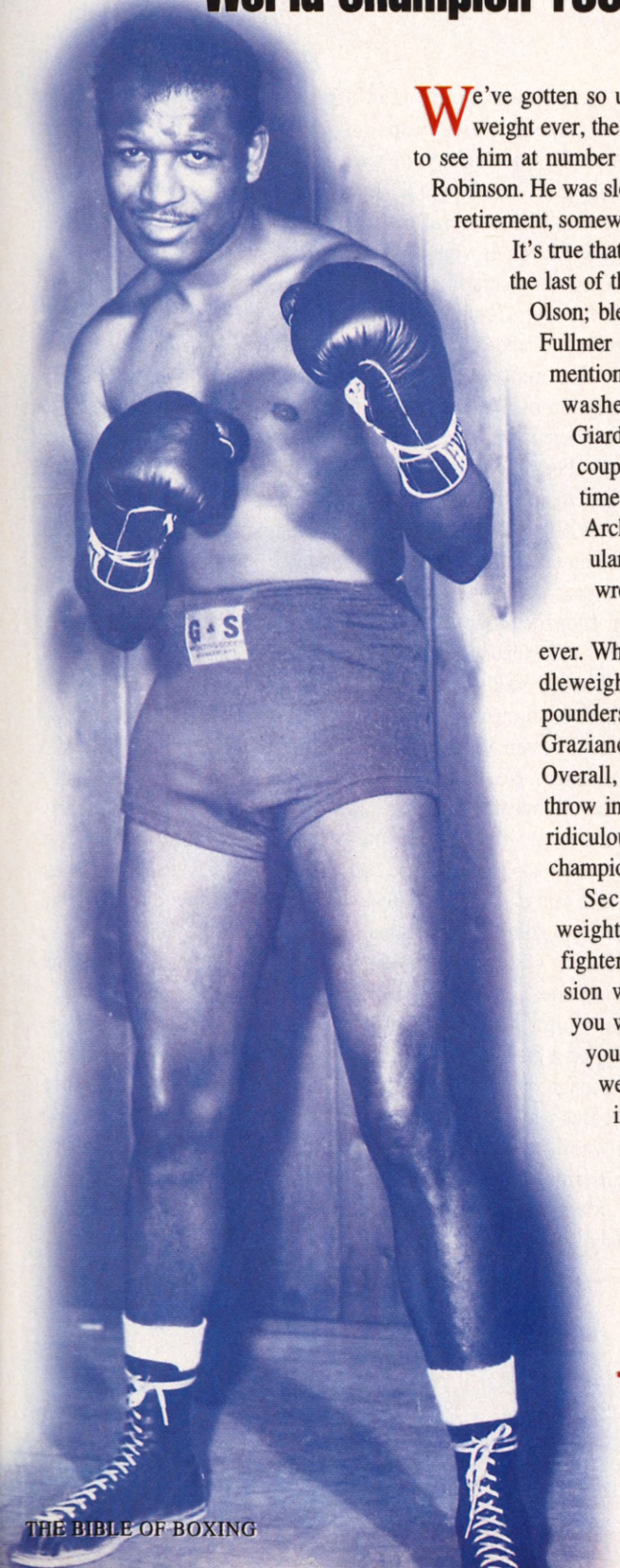
It can be argued against Greb that his title reign was brief compared to other middleweight legends—just three years between the time he butchered Johnny Wilson to win the title in '23 and was outboxed and dethroned by Tiger Flowers in '26. But during that span, he fought an unimaginable 57 times, beating, among others, Tommy Loughran, Mickey Walker, Johnny Papke, Ted Moore, Jimmy Slattery, Tony Marullo, and Bryan Downey, each leading contenders or former or future champions. (He also scored newspaper decisions over Flowers and "Slapsie" Maxie Rosenbloom.) Loughran, who eventually would win the light heavyweight title and find his own place in the Hall of Fame, could do no better than one win in his five bouts against Greb.

You want tough? Greb was stopped twice in 298 fights: in '13 by Joe Chip, and then again when he broke his arm against Kid Graves in Pittsburgh two years later. Consider also that he accomplished all that he did with only average hitting power; with only 51 stoppages in nearly 300 fights, he wasn't blowing away anyone early. Those who submitted did so at the strength of his will, not the strength of his punches.

Like most 160-pounders in that era, Greb dabbled at light heavy fairly often and even heavyweight on occasion; the crazy SOB tried like hell to get a fight with Jack Dempsey, but it never came off. Still, the great bulk of his work came at 160, and no other middleweight in history amassed such a record against better competition. Not Robinson, not Monzon, not Ketchel, not Hagler. Even if they looked better while trying.

# 2 SUGAR RAY ROBINSON

## 175-19-6 (109) with 2 no-contests
## World Champion 1951, '51-52, '55-57, '57, '58-'60



We've gotten so used to seeing Robinson's name at the top of lists—the best welterweight ever, the best of the 20th century, the best pound-for-pound—that it seems odd to see him at number two here. But the middleweight Robinson was not the welterweight Robinson. He was slower, older, and, particularly after returning in 1954 from a short-lived retirement, somewhat inconsistent.

It's true that the middleweight Robinson bested Jake LaMotta in '51 for the title in the last of their six wars; four times beat his favorite punching bag, Carl "Bobo" Olson; blew away former champ Rocky Graziano; and turned back both Gene Fullmer and Carmen Basilio. But he also lost to Basilio and Fullmer, not to mention Randy Turpin, Ralph "Tiger" Jones, and Paul Pender. And the old, washed-up Robinson who dropped decisions to Terry Downes, Joey Giardello, and, in the final year, Stan Harrington and Joey Archer, among a couple of others, was a middleweight. In fact, Robinson's record from the time he beat LaMotta for the title until he retired for good after losing to Archer—essentially his record at 160—is a respectable but hardly spectacular 54-17-4 (30) with 2 no-contests, not including his failed attempt to wrest the light heavyweight title from Joey Maxim in '52.

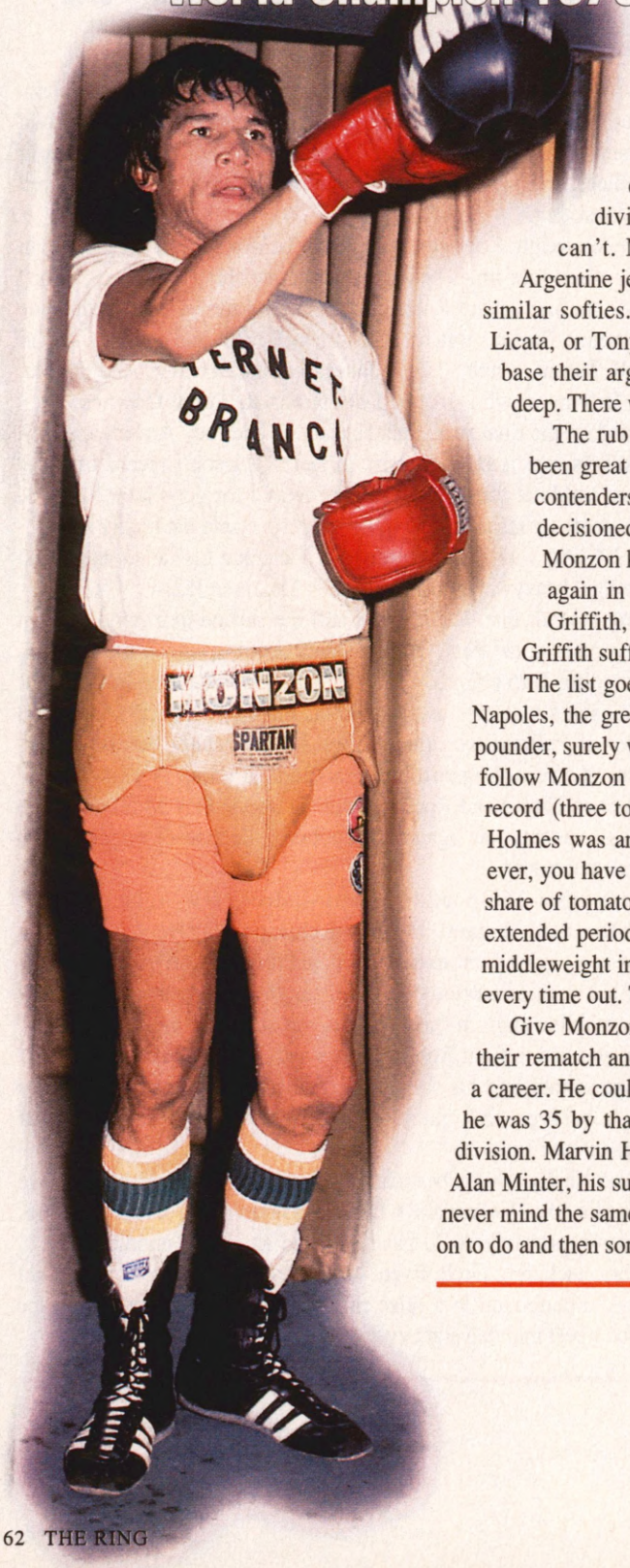
Having said all that, Robinson is still the second-best middleweight ever. Why? Several reasons: First, quality counts over quantity. No other middleweight, including Harry Greb, beat as many Hall of Fame-bound 160-pounders. Robinson's victories over LaMotta, Basilio, Fullmer, Olson, and Graziano—even if Fullmer won their series 2-1-1—cannot be discounted. Overall, Robinson's record against that star-studded group is 12-4-1. Now throw in wins over Turpin and Rocky Castellani and Holley Mims. That's a ridiculously high success rate against a superior collection of middleweight champions and contenders.

Second, no other 160-pound fighter—indeed, few fighters at any weight—transcended the game the way Robinson did. He wasn't just a fighter, he was a star and an immensely popular champion when the division was filled with exceptionally good, tough, charismatic fighters. If you were a middleweight in the '50s and you wanted a big-money fight, you knew you had to fight Robinson. His wars with Basilio and Fullmer were huge events, and his one-punch, fifth-round stoppage of Fullmer in '57 is quite possibly the most perfect knockout ever recorded of one man over another.

And finally, on his best day as a middleweight, which may have been the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre" win over LaMotta, Robinson probably could have whipped any other middleweight in history, including Greb. Even at 160 he was as close as you could come to perfection in a prize ring. Close enough to make him the second-best middleweight ever.

# 3 CARLOS MONZON

## 87-3-9 (59) with 1 no-contest
## World Champion 1970-'77




Discussion of Monzon's place among the great middleweights usually spawns some degree of discord in fight quarters. To the majority, he's easily one of the three of four best ever. How can you dispute 82 fights and 13 years without a loss, a division-record 14 successful defenses, and a seven-year reign? You can't. Not really. Even if you figure that half of his opponents were Argentine jelly donuts, and that a fair number of those 14 defenses came against similar softies. What did Jean-Claude Bouttier ever do, or Tom Bogs, or Tony Licata, or Tony Mundine? Nothing, really. And that's where Monzon's detractors base their argument. The middleweight division Monzon ruled was not overly deep. There was no Robinson, no Greb, no Ketchel or Hagler or even a Fullmer.

The rub is this: There were some very good middleweights who might have been great had it not been for Monzon. Try Bennie Briscoe, one of the sturdiest contenders around, whom Monzon drew with in Buenos Aries in 1967 and then decisioned in a title defense in '72. Try Nino Benvenuti, who was 82-4-1 when Monzon knocked him cold in 12 to win the title in '70, before turning the trick again in three a year later. Or how about an older but still dangerous Emile Griffith, whom Monzon stopped in '71—one of only two knockout losses Griffith suffered in a 112-bout career—and then decisioned in '73?

The list goes on: Rodrigo Valdes, who twice lost on points to Monzon. Or Jose Napoles, the great welterweight champion who, even though he was a natural 147-pounder, surely would have beaten a fair number of the middleweight champions who follow Monzon on these pages. No, there aren't a lot of Hall of Famers on Monzon's record (three to be exact: Benvenuti, Griffith, and Napoles). But if you think Larry Holmes was an all-time great, if you think Julio Cesar Chavez is one of the best ever, you have to count Monzon too. Because both Holmes and Chavez fought their share of tomato cans and taxi cab drivers. Guys who fight into triple digits over an extended period of time are going to face bums sometimes because unless you're a middleweight in the '20s or '40s or a welterweight in the '80s, you can't fight a star every time out. There just aren't enough to go around.

Give Monzon credit too for going out on top, even if was dropped by Valdes in their rematch and struggled a bit before recording his 14th title defense and calling it a career. He could have fought another year or two and won a few more even though he was 35 by that time. But what would have been the point? He'd cleaned out the division. Marvin Hagler wasn't ready for him yet. Hugo Corro, Vito Antuofermo, and Alan Minter, his successors after Valdes, didn't belong in the same time zone with him, never mind the same ring. Monzon did everything we could ask a middleweight champion to do and then some. Only two did it better.

# 4 MARVELOUS MARVIN HAGLER

## 62-3-2 (52)
## World Champion 1980-'87

It can be accurately said that the degree to which a champion hates losing is roughly equal in parts to how badly he lusts for victory. What does it say then that Hagler, after losing the title to Sugar Ray Leonard in 1987, took off for Italy to make action movies and never once entered a ring again? The defeat hurt him. Deeply. It wasn't like his early-career losses to Bobby Watts and Willie Monroe; those he avenged, emphatically, with knockout victories.

The Leonard fight? That was too much to bear. He thought he won it and a lot of others did, too. But he also knew he'd never get a return, and even if he did, he'd be too old to do anything with it. He was a tired 33 the first time around—Leonard had timed it well, you see—and his feet and hands had gotten slow and heavy with age. No, the next time would be worse. Much worse. So he did the only thing he could do: He said to hell with it and comforted himself with his memories and an absolute certainty that at his best, he was one of the finest middleweights ever.

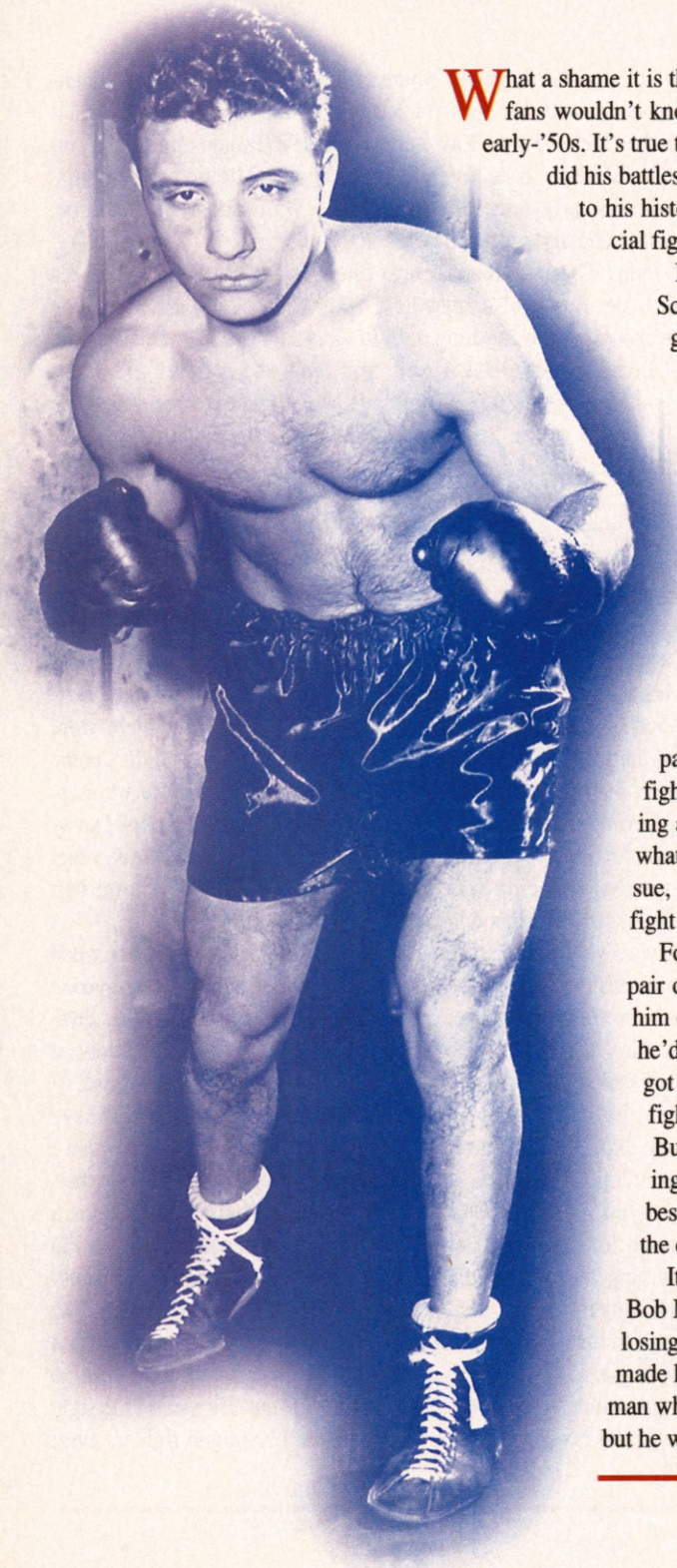
Hagler's middleweight heaven was a bit deeper than the one Carlos Monzon ruled 10 years earlier. Of his 12 title defenses, a few came against guys who wouldn't have been credible or long-reigning champions even if Hagler had never been born, guys like Caveman Lee, Wilford Scypion, Tony Sibson, and the mediocre bleeder Hagler ravaged for the title, Alan Minter. But there were some hard-nosed, skilled fighters in the mix, too. They didn't come tougher than Mustafa Hamsho, whom Hagler twice took apart, stopping him both times. Roberto Duran had just butchered poor Davey Moore for the junior middleweight title and was a full six years away from spanking Iran Barkley for the WBC 160-pound belt when Hagler decisioned him in '83.

There were others. Vito Antuofermo lucked into a draw when Hagler finally got his first shot at the title in '79, and was destroyed in the rematch two years later. Bennie Briscoe, too, whom Hagler decisioned in '78 and, of course, Thomas Hearns, who co-starred in one of the greatest fights ever before Hagler knocked him stiff in the third.

Hagler had all the tools a great fighter needs: speed, heavy hands, skill, a rock-hard chin, endurance. But lots of fighters have those things. They each can be fastened, to one degree or another, in the gym. Hagler also had what only other all-time greats have: a deep hatred for losing. He could have dropped to his knees and stayed put after taking any one of the dozens of right hands the murderous-punching John Mugabi laid on him in '86. Same for the Hearns fight. But he couldn't. It wasn't in his nature. Just like it wasn't in his nature to hang around anymore after losing to Leonard. Who needed it? He'd proved all he needed to and had every right to turn his back on the game and get out. He earned the right the same way he earned his place among the very best 160-pound fighters ever: by being Marvelous.

# 5 JAKE LaMOTTA

## 83-19-4 (30)
## World Champion 1949-'51



What a shame it is that if not for the film *Raging Bull*, a whole generation or two of boxing fans wouldn't know who LaMotta is or what he did at middleweight in the 1940s and early-'50s. It's true that the film didn't center on LaMotta's in-the-ring battles as much as it did his battles outside the ropes. But the direction was true and the plot loyal enough to his history that even uneducated viewers got a sense that LaMotta was a special fighter.

But even if the film had never been made, if Robert DeNiro and Martin Scorsese had thought the script too seamy and passed it by, fight game guys would remember LaMotta. You don't forget a guy who fought the great Sugar Ray Robinson down to the wire six times, including handing him his first loss, a decision in Detroit in '43. That was the best Robinson there ever was, and LaMotta whipped him fair and square. You don't forget a guy who beat every good middleweight contender out there—and there were a lot—all through the decade, guys like Hall of Famer Fritzie Zivic, whom LaMotta beat three times, or Jackie Wilson, or Tommy Bell, or George Costner, Jose Basora, or Holman Williams. The names mean nothing if all you know about LaMotta you learned from the movie, but they were all top-flight contenders during a sinfully fertile period in middleweight history.

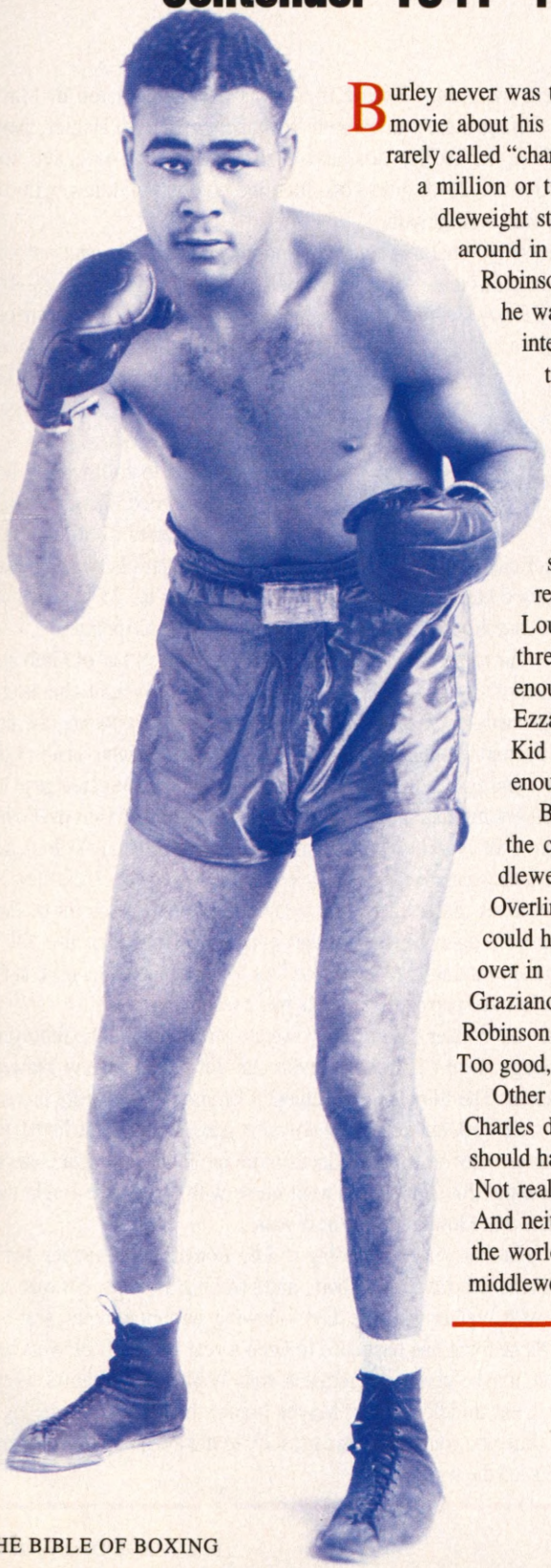
LaMotta didn't care. He'd fight anyone anywhere—though he was partial to Detroit—but he couldn't get what he wanted until he threw a fight against Billy Fox in '47, in a bout he could have won without breaking a sweat on the worst day of his life. But it got him his title shot, and so what if Marcel Cerdan hurt his shoulder. LaMotta's scar tissue had scar tissue, he'd been busted up and hurt so many times, and if Cerdan couldn't fight through the pain then to hell with him, LaMotta deserved the title.

Forget that LaMotta's reign lasted under two years and he managed just a pair of defenses. If the guys in the dark suits and all the cash hadn't frozen him out so long and strung him along because he wouldn't play their game, he'd have been the champ years before. He was already burnt out when he got the shot and even then, in the so-called "St. Valentines Day Massacre" fight with Robinson in '51, LaMotta led on two cards after eight rounds. But he was all dried out and used up from making 160, and he had nothing left when Robinson started teeing off late. Still he took everything the best fighter in history could give him, and at the end was looking him in the eye.

It was all over after the last Robinson fight. LaMotta got stopped by Irish Bob Murphy the next time out, won a few, lost a few, and quit for good after losing to Billy Kilgore in Miami in '54. But it was all right, because he had made his mark. Not just on Robinson, but on the era and on the souls of every man who fought him. No, he wasn't a great man—the movie made that clear—but he was a great fighter. And that's all he wanted to be.

# 6 CHARLEY BURLEY

## 84-11-2 (50) with 1 no-contest
## Contender 1941-'46



Burley never was the middleweight champion. He never wrote a book, and no one made a movie about his life. He never appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and he probably was rarely called "champ" by anyone. He should have had all those things. He should have made a million or two fighting Cerdan and Robinson and Conn and Zale and other middleweight stars. There were enough of them around. He should have gotten to drive around in a bright pink Cadillac and been swarmed by fans wherever he went, like Robinson did. A lot of things should have happened for Burley that didn't because he was too good and too black and because he didn't play games. He wasn't interested in losing the first to set up a series or doing a swan dive to get a title shot. So he never was the middleweight champion.

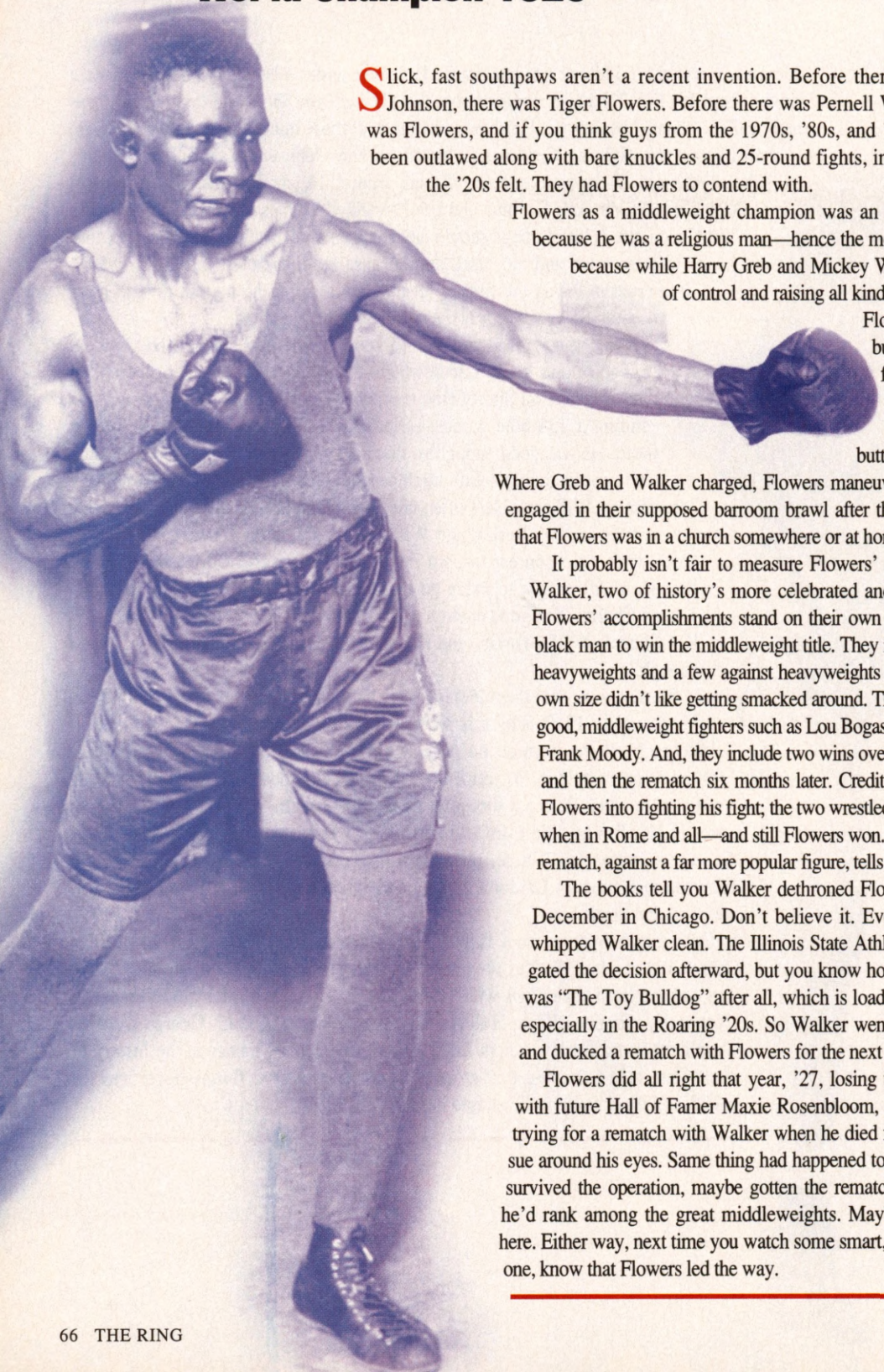
Burley was good enough. So good that he beat Fritzie Zivic two out of three and future middleweight champion Billy Soose. So good that he knocked out Shorty Hogue and decisioned Archie Moore, who, after ending a 234-bout career, called Burley the toughest man he'd ever faced. He was good enough so that a lot of guys didn't want to fight him, so he kept on facing great middleweight contender Holman Williams. You remember Williams. He's often credited with teaching some kid named Joe Louis how to box. Burley and Williams fought seven times, each winning three with a no-contest thrown in for good measure. Burley was a good enough middleweight to twice go the distance with future heavyweight king Ezzard Charles, and good enough to knock out contenders Jackie Burke, Baby Kid Chocolate, J.D. Turner, and Harvey Massey, among others. He was good enough.

Burley never was the middleweight champion, in part because Ken Overlin, the champ in 1940, which is when Burley was just starting to hit his middleweight stride, wanted no part of him. Neither did Soose when he beat Overlin for the title in '41; remember, Burley beat Soose silly back in '38. Zale could have given Burley a shot after he won the title in '41, or after the war was over in '46. But he didn't. Instead he went to war again, this time against Rocky Graziano—who, you'll note, never fought Burley either. But then neither did Robinson or Cerdan or LaMotta. None of the great middleweights wanted Burley. Too good, too black.

Other black fighters from Burley's era made it, you might argue. Moore and Charles did it, after all. Yes they did, but after too many years of struggle. They should have been champions well before they were crowned. Many didn't make it. Not really. Jimmy Bivins, Holman Williams, Lloyd Marshall, George Costner. And neither did Burley, whom Eddie Futch, the greatest trainer in the history of the world, called the finest all-around fighter he ever saw. Burley never was the middleweight champion. He should have been.

# 7 TIGER FLOWERS

## 115-14-6 (53) with 21 no-decisions, 1 no-contest
## World Champion 1926



Slick, fast southpaws aren't a recent invention. Before there was Stevie Johnston or Mark Johnson, there was Tiger Flowers. Before there was Pernell Whitaker or Marvin Hagler, there was Flowers, and if you think guys from the 1970s, '80s, and '90s wished good southpaws had been outlawed along with bare knuckles and 25-round fights, imagine how the middleweights of the '20s felt. They had Flowers to contend with.

Flowers as a middleweight champion was an anomaly in the '20s, and not just because he was a religious man—hence the moniker "The Georgia Deacon"—but because while Harry Greb and Mickey Walker and guys like them were out of control and raising all kinds of hell, both in and out of the ring, Flowers was quietly going about his business and doing so without much fanfare or flash. Where Greb and Walker liked to follow up a left hook with a good elbow or head-butt, Flowers preferred a stiff right jab. Where Greb and Walker charged, Flowers maneuvered. And when Greb and Walker engaged in their supposed barroom brawl after their 15-rounder in '25, you can bet that Flowers was in a church somewhere or at home memorizing scripture.

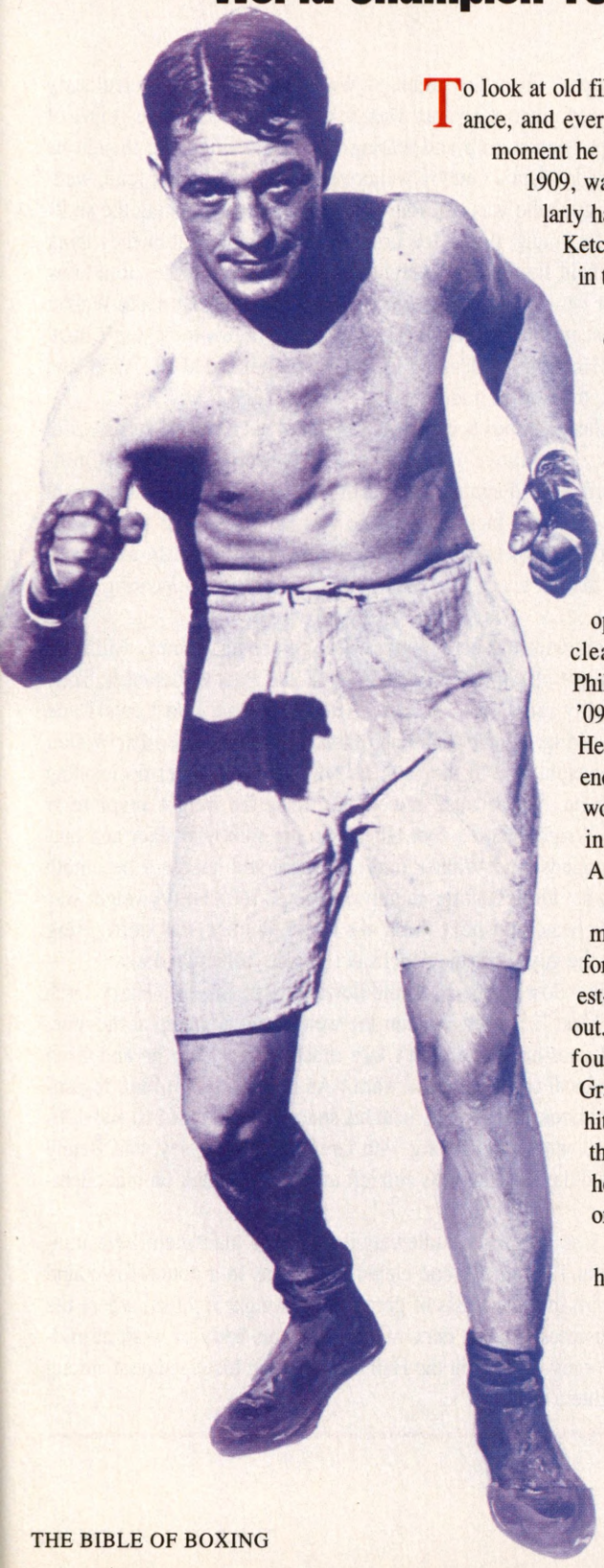
It probably isn't fair to measure Flowers' successes against that of Greb and Walker, two of history's more celebrated and adored middleweight characters. Flowers' accomplishments stand on their own and they include becoming the first black man to win the middleweight title. They include dozens of fights against light heavyweights and a few against heavyweights that he had to take because guys his own size didn't like getting smacked around. They include a host of wins over other good, middleweight fighters such as Lou Bogash, Jock Malone, Johnny Wilson, and Frank Moody. And, they include two wins over Greb: the first to claim the title '26, and then the rematch six months later. Credit Greb in the first match for sucking Flowers into fighting his fight; the two wrestled, gouged, and hit one another low—when in Rome and all—and still Flowers won. That he got the decision again in the rematch, against a far more popular figure, tells you it wasn't that close.

The books tell you Walker dethroned Flowers over 10 rounds the following December in Chicago. Don't believe it. Everyone who saw it knew Flowers whipped Walker clean. The Illinois State Athletic Commission allegedly investigated the decision afterward, but you know how that goes. Walker was loved. He was "The Toy Bulldog" after all, which is loads more fun than a Georgia Deacon, especially in the Roaring '20s. So Walker went home with the middleweight title and ducked a rematch with Flowers for the next year.

Flowers did all right that year, '27, losing to Leo Lomski, but drawing twice with future Hall of Famer Maxie Rosenbloom, and notching 14 wins. He was still trying for a rematch with Walker when he died following surgery to repair scar tissue around his eyes. Same thing had happened to Greb a year earlier. If Flowers had survived the operation, maybe gotten the rematch with Walker, who knows where he'd rank among the great middleweights. Maybe higher than Greb. Maybe right here. Either way, next time you watch some smart, slick southpaw going off on someone, know that Flowers led the way.

# 8 STANLEY KETCHEL

## 52-4-4 (49) with 4 no-decisions
## World Champion 1908, '08-'10



To look at old films of Ketchel, you'd think he was a bum. Everything was wild, off-balance, and every two seconds he was clinching and mauling. Even the most glorious moment he had, which was the second or two he had Jack Johnson on the mat in 1909, was produced by a right hand that hardly looked educated or even particularly hard. It was clumsy and long, and the second Johnson got up, he flattened Ketchel with a right of his own, snapping off several of the challenger's teeth in the process.

So big deal. Ketchel scored a flash knockdown of Johnson and couldn't even look good doing that. Why is he on this list? Because despite his collapse against Johnson, and despite how inept he looks on film today, he dominated the middleweight division in the 20th century's first decade. There wasn't a 160-pound fighter in the world he wouldn't or didn't face. And with the lone exception of Maurice Thompson, who decisioned him twice in Ketchel's first full year as a pro, no middleweight got the best of him.

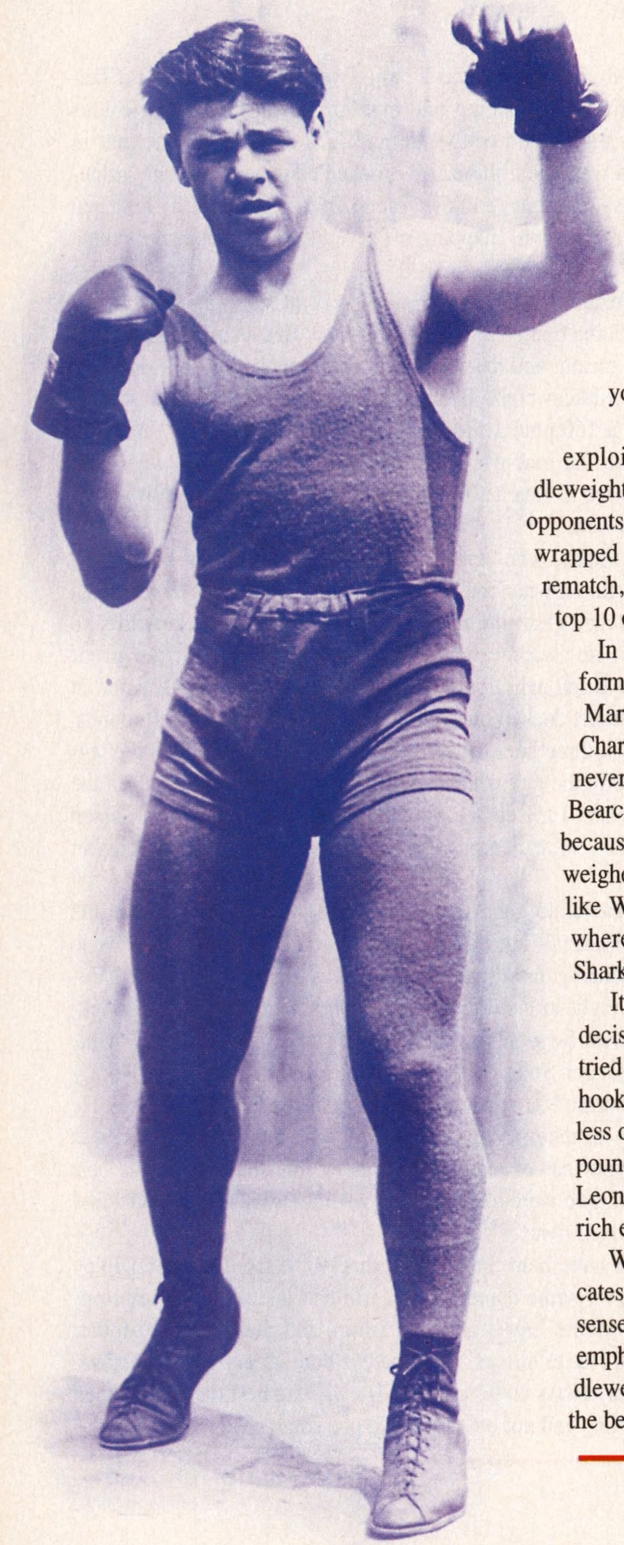
Not Billy Papke, who stopped him in 12 in '08 when he clocked Ketchel in the throat when the two were supposed to shake hands at the opening bell. Ketchel spent the next 11 rounds trying unsuccessfully to clear his head, but he twice ravaged Papke in returns. Not the great Philadelphia Jack O'Brien, who fought Ketchel to a 10-round no-decision in '09 even though Ketchel decked him four times in the ninth and 10th rounds. He obliterated him in three later the same year in the rematch. Even the legendary Sam Langford, the guy who scared witless every white fighter in the world, wasn't too scary for Ketchel. They fought to a six-round no-decision in '10, though the newspaper guys called it a win for "The Michigan Assassin."

What made Ketchel so good that it took him just six years to win the middleweight title and all but clean out the division with no virtually no formal training? Look again at his record. He was quite probably the hardest-hitting middleweight in history. In '05, he won 17 fights, all by knockout. The following year he won six, all stoppages. The year after, five wins, four knockouts. Forget Sugar Ray Robinson's right hand and Rocky Graziano's, too. Rodrigo Valdes was a banger also, but not like Ketchel. He hit harder than any of them and has the record to prove it. How good was this guy? Of his four career losses, one was to Johnson, one of the best heavyweights ever, two were to Thompson when he was still a rookie, and one to Papke, avenged twice.

Ketchel might have held the title another 10 years if Walter Dipley hadn't shot him over some dame in 1910. He had just scored quick stoppage wins over Willie Lewis and Jim Smith, and there wasn't another middleweight threat to him as far as the eye could see. So don't believe it when the guy looks awful on film. He was the best there was when he was fighting, and not by a little. No one came close.

# 9 MICKEY WALKER

## 93-19-4 (60) with 46 no-decisions, 1 no-contest
## World Champion 1926-'31



Most people, when they think of Walker, think of his ridiculously brave performance against Max Schmeling in 1932. They think of how he kept bouncing up and tearing into Schmeling even though he was little more than a chubby welterweight, for crying out loud, wading into a guy who was still four years away from knocking the stuffing out of a young, prime Joe Louis. They think of that or they think of how he held future heavyweight champion Jack Sharkey to a draw in '31. Either way, neither of those performances are what make Walker one of the best middleweights ever, though certainly they don't hurt. Picture Bernard Hopkins challenging Evander Holyfield or Mike Tyson, and you get a sense for the kind of middleweight Walker was.

Walker places where he does because in addition to his frequently successful exploits at light heavy and above—though he rarely weighed over the middleweight limit—his record is solid against a collection of high-quality middleweight opponents. If you can put aside the fact that the title was handed to him with a gift-wrapped decision over Tiger Flowers in '26, and that he then expertly avoided a rematch, you can accept that he was a fine champion and worthy of appearing in the top 10 of all-time.

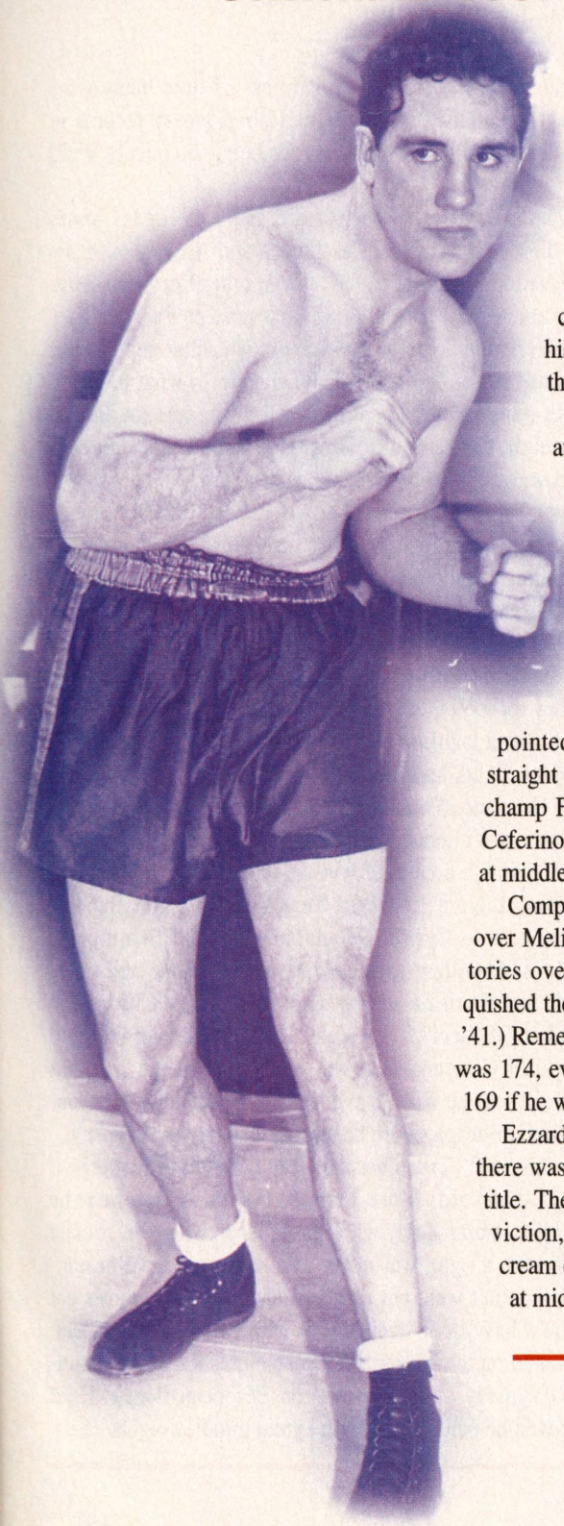
In his first two years with the belt, Walker beat contender Tommy Milligan, former light heavyweight champions Mike McTigue and Paul Berlenbach, Tony Marullo, and the highly rated Ace Hudkins. After that came Leo Lomski and Charley Belanger and Mike Mandell, among others. Also remember that Walker never lost the middleweight title in the ring; he relinquished it after decisioning Bearcat Wright in Omaha. Not because he couldn't make the weight anymore or because he was bored. Wright stood a foot taller than the stubby Walker and outweighed him by 100 pounds, and Walker figured if he could handle a behemoth like Wright, what was he doing making chump change at 160? Heavyweight was where the real money was, and next thing we knew Walker was outfighting Sharkey, even though the guys with the pencils at ringside called it a draw.

It's true that Walker lost to the best middleweights of his era; Harry Greb decisioned him over 15 in '25 when Walker, the welterweight champ at the time, tried to move up. (Rumor had it he didn't fare much better when he and Greb hooked up again at a local speakeasy afterward.) And Flowers beat him, regardless of what the record books say. But he beat his share of top-flight 160 and 170-pounders, and he did it with style. Along with Greb, Jack Dempsey, and Benny Leonard, he epitomized the Roaring '20s and left an indelible mark on that talent-rich era.

Walker probably was a better middleweight than this placement here indicates. His adventures at 175 and beyond elevate his status in a pound-for-pound sense, but they hurt him in an analysis of great middleweight fighters, where the emphasis is on the business that got done at 160. Still, his body of work at middleweight justifies not only his spot in the Hall of Fame, but his placement among the best 160-pound fighters ever.

# 10 BILLY CONN

## 63-12-1 (14)
## Contender 1937-'39



Sometimes a fighter's best work goes unnoticed by history because other things, more provocative things, get all the attention. Conn, of course, is best remembered for having the great Joe Louis all but whipped going into the 13th round of their 1941 heavyweight title fight, then getting stupid—or Irish, as he would say later—and getting knocked out. He's also recalled, to a lesser degree perhaps, as one of the five or six best light heavyweight champions ever. That's warranted. He was a wonderful 175-pound champion who made three defenses against good competition before realizing his quickness and skill could make an awful lot of heavyweights look silly and at the same time line his pockets green.

But for all of his accomplishments at 175 and above, Conn's best work came at middleweight. He started out at welter in '34 and was 160 or thereabouts by '37, the year after he slapped around and outpointed Fritzie Zivic in an all-Pittsburgh showdown. In that year Conn beat Babe Risko, the former NBA New York middleweight champion; he beat Vince Dundee, who won the same title from Lou Brouillard; he beat top contender Teddy Yarosz, twice; he split a pair of bouts with former welterweight champ Young Corbett III; and he lost a 12-rounder to future NBA 160-pound champ Solly Kreiger.

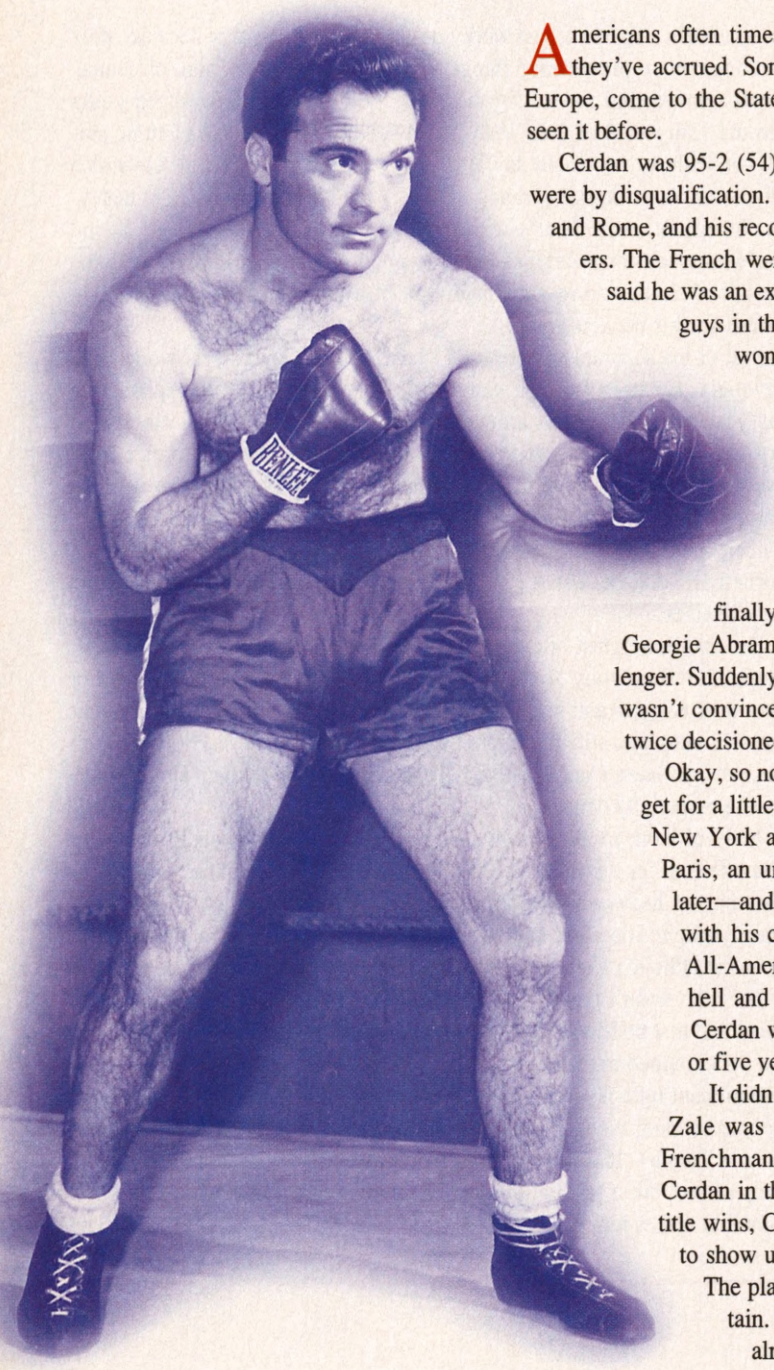
The middleweight Conn wasn't done. The following year he twice outpointed top contender Honeyboy Jones, dropped one to Yarosz, then scored four straight wins: two over Kreiger and back-to-back non-title victories over middleweight champ Fred Apostoli, who was still four fights away from losing the title officially to Ceferino Garcia. One fight later, Conn was the light heavyweight champion and his days at middleweight were essentially done.

Compare that body of work to that drawn at light heavy and heavyweight: two wins over Melio Bettina (the first for the title), two defenses against Gus Lesnevich, eight victories over a mixed bag of heavyweight contenders, and the Louis fights. (Conn relinquished the light heavyweight title after stopping Gunnar Barlund in eight rounds in April '41.) Remember also that although Conn's announced weight for the first match with Louis was 174, everyone knew he wasn't that big. Conn himself later revealed that he was only 169 if he was a pound and that he had to work to get that high.

Ezzard Charles isn't counted among most historians' top 10 heavyweights ever, but if there was a more dominant light heavyweight, we never saw him. And he never won that title. The same could be said, though admittedly without quite the same degree of conviction, about Gene Tunney. It just works out that way sometimes. Conn wasn't the cream of the crop at 160, but if you believe he is an all-time great, it's largely his work at middleweight that makes him so.

# 11 MARCEL CERDAN

## 106-4 (61)
## World Champion 1948-'49



Americans often times scoff at European fighters, regardless of how many wins they've accrued. Sometimes it's warranted. Fighters build big, glossy records in Europe, come to the States, and flop. Who could blame us for being skeptical? We'd seen it before.

Cerdan was 95-2 (54) before he ever crossed the Atlantic, and both of his losses were by disqualification. But all those wins came in Casablanca and Algiers and Paris and Rome, and his record was predominantly amassed against other European fighters. The French were crazy about him, naturally, as was most of Europe. They said he was an exceptionally sound boxer and an accurate puncher and that our guys in the States had better be prepared. Whatever. So what that he'd won the Inter-Allied Tournament during the war, and the French middleweight title, and the European middleweight title? He may as well have been fighting amateurs.

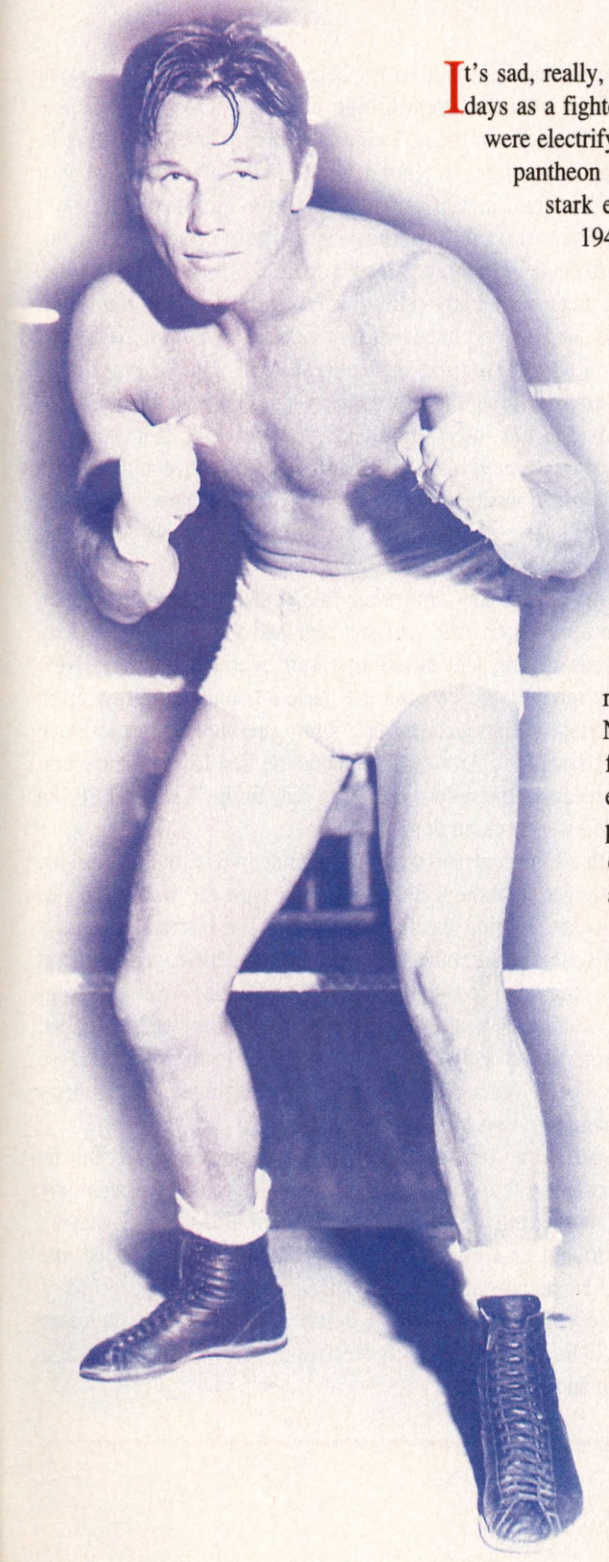
We should have known Cerdan was the goods when veteran hard-luck middleweight contender Holman Williams went over to Paris to face him and was sent home with a 10-round decision loss on his record. Two fights later, in December of '46, Cerdan finally made his debut in New York and dealt the same result to Georgie Abrams, another top-notch contender and former world title challenger. Suddenly, Cerdan was a legitimate contender, and just in case anyone wasn't convinced yet, three fights later he flattened Harold Green, who had twice decisioned Rocky Graziano. (Graziano also stopped Green in '45.)

Okay, so now America was interested, finally, but Cerdan played hard to get for a little while, notching a couple of wins in Paris before returning to New York and stopping Lavern Roach in New York in eight. Back to Paris, an unexpected loss to Cyrille Delannoit—avenged two months later—and all of the sudden there was Cerdan, all handsome and suave with his curly hair and charisma staring across the Jersey City ring at All-American "Man Of Steel" Tony Zale. Zale had already been to hell and back against Graziano, and was at the end of the line, but Cerdan was up there too; he was 32 and those who had seen him four or five years earlier in Europe swore he already was on the downside.

It didn't matter how old Cerdan was and it may not have mattered if Zale was a spry 25-year-old. More than 20,000 fans watched the Frenchman box rings around Zale, who, except for when he rocked Cerdan in the fourth with a right, was never in it. After a couple of non-title wins, Cerdan's shoulder went out against LaMotta and he never got to show us how he'd have done against him with two good shoulders. The plane he was in on the way to the rematch crashed into a mountain. But he'd already proved he was no European flunky. He'd already proved he belonged with the great middleweights.

# 12 TONY ZALE

## 67-18-2 (45)
## World Champion 1941-'47, '48



It's sad, really, that the fights for which Zale is best remembered came well past his best days as a fighter. His two wars with Rocky Graziano—the third was rather a walkover—were electrifying, brutal affairs that today, more than 50 years later, remain in the sport's pantheon of great fights, immortalized forever in words and pictures. They serve as stark examples of how great the middleweight division was then, back in the 1940s, when two skilled, hard-nosed warriors took the best the other could give, and all anyone could do who saw them was gasp.

The truth is Zale was pretty much done by the time Graziano got to him in '47 and took the title in their second fight. He was 34 by then with a lot of hard miles on his ticker. His first year in the pro ranks had come 13 years earlier when he lost six out of his first 21; in his second year he dropped three more, two by knockout. But he got better. The next year he lost just two of eight, and the next two of 11. By the time he took the NBA middleweight title with a 13th-round kayo of Al Holstak in Seattle, he had run up a 12-fight winning streak. He wasn't overwhelming, but Zale had a solid chin, a wicked body attack, and a heck of a punch. And once he got going, his will was impossible to break.

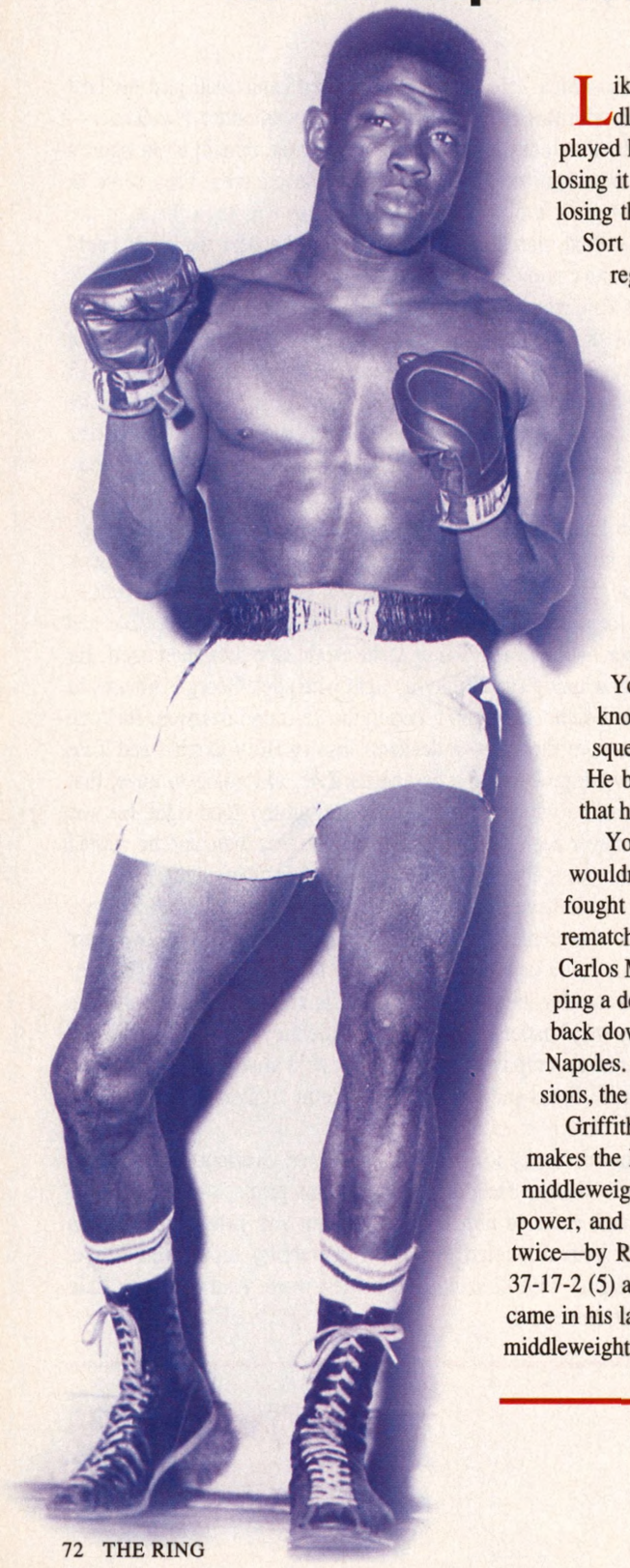
Except for a decision loss to Billy Soose in August '40, Zale had gotten it together by the time his shot at the world title presented itself. He rode a seven-bout winning streak into his fight with slick Georgie Abrams in November '41 and didn't disappoint, taking the 15-round decision. Just one fight followed before the war—a decision loss to Billy Conn—and Zale enlisted. Those were probably the best years Zale was going to have, that period from '43 to '45 when he was helping to fight the good fight. He was only 30, he had never been a better fighter than he was then, and he wasted away during those years, the way Joe Louis and a few others did.

Maybe Zale would have accomplished much more had he not lost those years. Maybe he'd be remembered for something other than the two wars with Graziano. It could be worse. Pugs by the thousands have fought their hearts out for years for the kind of legacy Zale and Graziano left, for the kind of money they made, for the kind of fame they earned and enjoyed. Even if Zale had accomplished nothing else, he'd always be remembered for the Graziano fights and their brutality. Some fighters no one remembers.

In retrospect, maybe it's better that Zale met Graziano when he was over the hill. Had he faced him closer to his prime, say in '41, he'd probably have starched him without incident and gone on to enjoy a fairly nondescript title reign. His own vulnerability, brought on by age, made the fights with Graziano what they were. And for them Zale should be remembered.

# 13 EMILE GRIFFITH

## 85-24-2 (23) with 1 no-contest
## World Champion 1966-'67, '67-'68



Like Sugar Ray Robinson, Griffith was a better welterweight than middleweight. At 147, he won the world title in just his fourth year as a pro, played hot potato with it a couple of times, losing it to Benny Paret, regaining it, losing it to Luis Rodriguez, regaining it. He did the same thing at middleweight, losing the belt to Nino Benvenuti in 1967, regaining it from him, losing it again. Sort of the way Robinson lost the middleweight title to Carmen Basilio, regained it, lost it to Gene Fullmer, regained it again.

That's pretty much where any similarities to Robinson end. Benvenuti was no Fullmer or Basilio, and Griffith was no Sugar Ray. He didn't have Robinson's power or speed or overall skill. But he was smart enough and versatile enough to adapt his style to better match his opponents'. Whatever it took, most times Griffith could do it. If he was facing a bigger, stronger guy, like Dick Tiger, he could move and box and keep his man on the outside. Against someone without power, he could muscle his way inside and use a set of shoulders that were wider and bigger than any middleweight had a right to own.

Griffith didn't waste any time when he decided to move up. In '66 he went right after Tiger, who had just regained the crown from Joey Giardello the year before, and decisioned him over 15 rounds in New York. He did it by moving and keeping the muscle-bound Tiger tied up in knots. Then he switched gears again, turning into a pressure fighter to twice squeak by New York rival Joey Archer. Then came the first loss to Benvenuti. He beat the tall European in the return, then lost it again in '68, and just like that his days as a middleweight champion were over.

You'd think Griffith's impact at 160 would have ended there, but if it did, he wouldn't be on these pages. Although he never again won the world title, he fought for nine more years, beating the likes of Gypsy Joe Harris, Tiger in a rematch, Ernie Lopez (twice), and Bennie Briscoe. He even challenged the great Carlos Monzon twice, lasting into the 14th round in '71 in Buenos Aries and dropping a decision in Monte Carlo two years later. In an unheard of move, he dropped back down to welterweight in '69 and dropped a 15-rounder to the splendid Jose Napoles. He finally retired at 39 years old in '77 after dropping three straight decisions, the last to future champion Alan Minter.

Griffith was too inconsistent at 160 to land among the upper echelon. But he makes the list because he twice beat another legend in Tiger, because he fought any middleweight willing to get in the ring with him, and because of his longevity, staying power, and versatility. He fought as a middleweight for 11 years, was stopped just twice—by Rubin Carter and Monzon—and at an advanced age compiled a record of 37-17-2 (5) against the best 160-pound fighters in the world. And seven of those losses came in his last three years. So he wasn't Sugar Ray Robinson. He was still a heck of a middleweight, and that's good enough for us.

# 14 DICK TIGER

## 61-17-3 (26)
## World Champion 1963, 1965-'66

It doesn't do Tiger's memory justice that a lot of casual fans recall him just as the guy Bob Foster flattened to win the light heavyweight title. If they think hard, they'll remember that he beat Jose Torres for the 175-pound title, too. But ask them what he did at middleweight and they draw a blank. You almost can't blame them.

It didn't look early on as though Tiger would amount to much. After doing some good early work in Nigeria, he went to Liverpool, England, in 1955 and that year and the next he promptly dropped four in a row to guys you never heard of. It got a little better in '57; he lost only once in nine fights and he gradually refined the style and considerable skills that complemented his physical strength and durability. And he learned against the best middleweight contenders out there: Spider Webb, Randy Sandy, Rory Calhoun, a young Joey Giardello, Holley Mims, Victor Zalazar. He didn't win them all, but he won his share, splitting his two-bout series with Sandy, drawing with and losing to Calhoun, splitting with Giardello, and beating Mims, Webb, and Henry Hank. By the time he starched Gene "Ace" Armstrong in New York City and top-rated Florentino Fernandez in six rounds in Miami Beach in '62, he was ready for the big time, which presented itself in the form of Gene Fullmer.

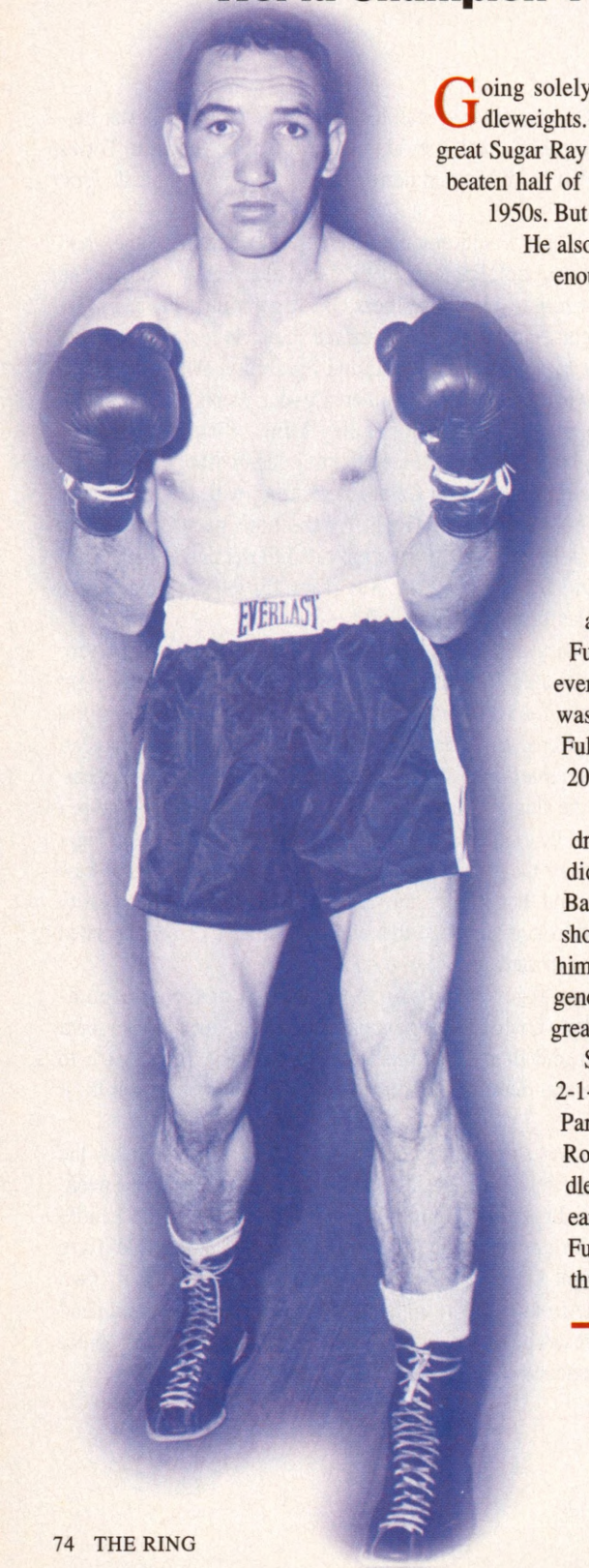
Fullmer was no easy mark; he had just beaten Sugar Ray Robinson for the final time, decisioned Fernandez, and brutalized poor welterweight champion Benny Paret for 10 rounds, no doubt contributing significantly to the tragic fate Paret suffered at the hands of Emile Griffith the following year. But Tiger was an immovable force, and he sliced open Fullmer's eyes and battered him. By the time the slugfest was halfway over, Fullmer knew he couldn't win that way and shifted gears, boxing and moving, but it was too late. Tiger beat him soundly to capture the WBA title. They fought twice more: to a draw the following November, and then Tiger removed any doubts as to his superiority with a resounding seventh-round stoppage that ended Fullmer's career. It netted Tiger universal recognition as the world champion.

Now here's what keeps Tiger out of the upper echelon of the great middleweights: He lost the title to Giardello the next time out, lost to Joey Archer, beat Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and then Giardello to regain the belt, then lost it to Griffith before moving up and dethroning Torres at 175. Inconsistency will do it every time.

Still, at 160 Tiger never was stopped, and in 81 fights, only Foster, probably the most explosive light heavyweight ever, was able to put him out. He beat two eventual Hall of Hamers in Fullmer and Giardello, even if he never could handle Griffith, who whipped him once more in '70. To his credit, a 39-year-old Tiger did decision middleweight king Nino Benvenuti in a '69 non-title bout. Two years later he was broke from the civil uprising in his native Nigeria, and dead from liver cancer. He deserved better. From life and from those who remember him only as that guy stretched out at Foster's feet.

# 15 GENE FULLMER

## 55-6-3 (24)
## World Champion 1957




Going solely on talent, Fullmer didn't belong in the ring with any of the great middleweights. Going solely on talent, he shouldn't have been allowed to share a cab with the great Sugar Ray Robinson, never mind a prize ring. Going solely on talent, he shouldn't have beaten half of the talented mix of middleweight contenders he ran roughshod over in the 1950s. But this is a game more about desire than talent, and desire Fullmer had in spades. He also had a chin made of the same stuff they fashion those black boxes out of and enough hard-earned endurance to outlast most ocean liners.

Fullmer wasn't a great hitter despite an obvious abundance of physical strength; he wore guys down with pressure, and then he pressured them after that, and if that didn't work, he tried pressuring them. Once in a while he'd use his head as a battering ram and his shoulders and elbows too, and if all of that failed, he punched as a last resort. Most of the time, the strategy worked.

It worked against Gil Turner and Rocky Castellani, for example. It worked against Ralph "Tiger" Jones and Chico Vejar, too, and Milo Savage and Spider Webb and Joe Miceli and Florentino Fernandez. And it worked, miracle of all miracles, against Robinson in their first fight, when after bulling Sugar Ray into the ropes and working him over for 15 rounds, Fullmer was the champ of all the world. You wondered how in the hell he took everything Robinson gave him on the way in all night, but somehow he did. It was working in their second match, at least for four-and-a-half rounds, until Fullmer walked into the best hook Robinson ever threw. He got his senses back 20 minutes later in the dressing room.

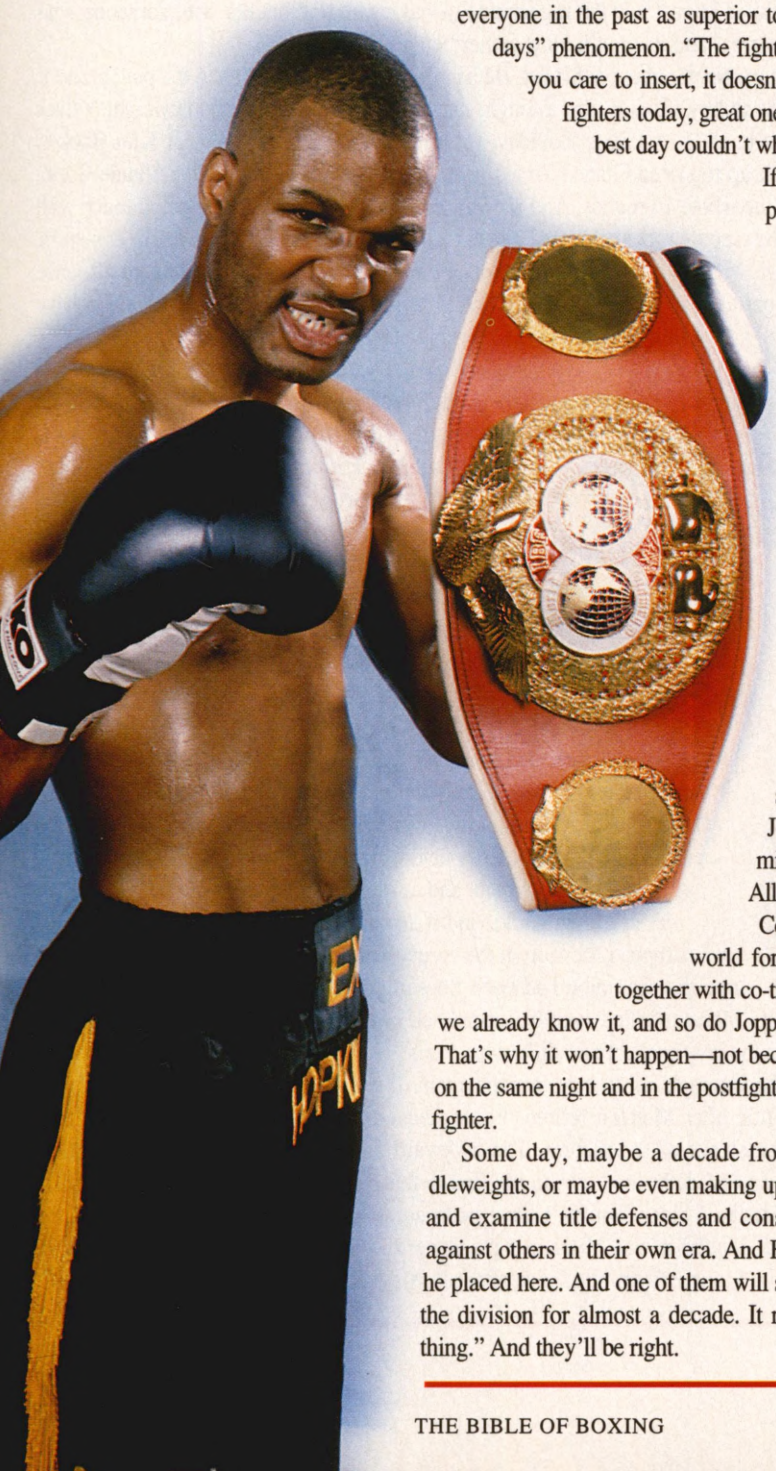
It worked again more or less in the third Robinson fight, which was called a draw, and it worked in the final in '61, when Robinson was all but gone but didn't know it yet. It worked twice against former welter bulldog Carmen Basilio, and when it didn't work, as was the case against Dick Tiger, Fullmer showed that he could box a little, too. Not well enough to beat Tiger, who retired him in '63, but well enough all the same. A lot of folks thought Fullmer was genetically incapable of circling or jabbing from the outside. Not so. He wasn't great at it, but he could do it.

Some will be put off by Fullmer's placement outside the top 10. Hell, he was 2-1-1 against the best fighter in the history of fighting and beat Basilio, Benny Paret, and all those good, sturdy middleweight contenders. All true. But the Robinson he beat in '57 was not the best Robinson, or even the best middleweight Robinson. That Robinson was busy whipping Jake LaMotta six years earlier. Basilio and Paret? Both great welterweights; not great middleweights. Fullmer is in the Hall of Fame and deservedly so. It's where he belongs. So is this.

# 16 BERNARD HOPKINS

## 37-2-1 (27) with 1 no-contest
## IBF Champion 1995-Present

Let's face it: Hopkins looks a little out of place here among all these legends and Hall of Famers. He shouldn't. Contemporary fighters frequently are underrated because they're, well, contemporary, and because we're usually uncomfortable conferring all-time great status on fighters until their careers can be viewed from beginning to end. Not only that, we tend to view everything and everyone in the past as superior to that which is here today—otherwise knows as the "good old days" phenomenon. "The fighters were better in 1930s, or '40s, or '50s," or whatever decade you care to insert, it doesn't matter, so long as it's the past. It's hogwash. There are good fighters today, great ones too, and there are some mediocre ones and some who on their best day couldn't whip your sister. Same as it was in the '30s, '40s, and '50s.



If it helps, forget Hopkins is the current IBF middleweight champion. Pretend he fought in the '70s and has been retired for the last 20 years. Now examine the stats: Hopkins lost his pro debut to one Clinton Mitchell, then proceeded to string together 22 wins, 16 by knockout, 12 in the first round. Some of the guys were ham-and-eggers, and some weren't; Willie Kemp, Dennis Milton, and Gilbert Baptist were all capable middleweights. He lost a 12-rounder to Roy Jones, who ultimately would become universally recognized as the best fighter on the planet, beat Melvin Wynn and Lupe Aquino, and drew with the tough Segundo Mercado for the vacant IBF belt. He blasted Mercado in seven in the return and has since run off 11 defenses (one less than Hagler).

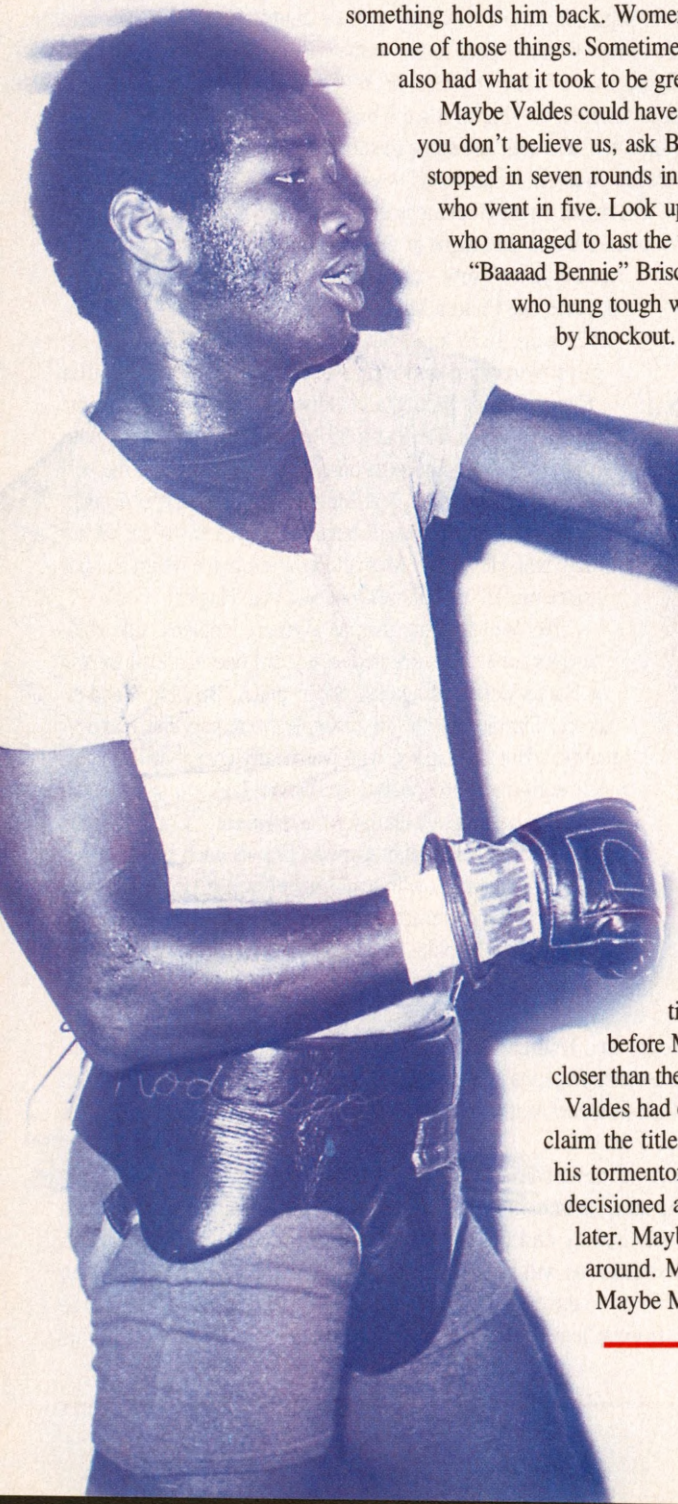
No one is saying that, as a group, Hopkins' title challengers are even as talented as say, the ones Carlos Monzon or Hagler defended against. Steve Frank, Bo James, and an ancient Simon Brown, for example, were especially underqualified. But Joe Lipsey, who was nearly decapitated in four, was a legitimate prospect; John David Jackson, stopped in seven, a former WBA champion; and Andrew Council, Glen Johnson, Robert Allen, and Antwun Echols each highly rated middleweight contenders who could fight (even if Hopkins turned Allen into a dog in their rematch).

Consider this, too: Hopkins has been the best middleweight in the world for six years. It's indisputable. It would be great if he could get together with co-titlists William Joppy and Keith Holmes already and prove it, but we already know it, and so do Joppy and Holmes. And more importantly, so does their promoter. That's why it won't happen—not because Hopkins doesn't want it to. He'd probably fight them both on the same night and in the postfight interview start badmouthing David Reid and Jones. The guy's a fighter.

Some day, maybe a decade from now, some fight guys will be talking about great middleweights, or maybe even making up a list like this one. They'll look at tapes and compare records and examine title defenses and consistency and quality of opposition and how the fighters did against others in their own era. And Hopkins will be on the list, assuredly several rungs higher than he placed here. And one of them will say to the other, "Man, that Hopkins could fight. He dominated the division for almost a decade. It must have been great, back in the '90s, to watch him do his thing." And they'll be right.

# 17 RODRIGO VALDES

## 63-8-2 (41)
## WBC Champion 1974-'76, World Champion 1977-'78



Sometimes, a fighter has in him what it takes to be great. He has the punch, he has the skills, he has the heart and desire, and all the other stuff that gets guys into the Hall of Fame and high onto lists like this one. But something holds him back. Women maybe, or the thirst, or gambling, or some other vice. Sometimes it's none of those things. Sometimes he just has the misfortune of having shared his era with someone who also had what it took to be great and just put it all together better.

Maybe Valdes could have been higher on this list. He had the tools. He certainly had the punch, and if you don't believe us, ask Bobby Cassidy Sr., a tough, hard-headed New York middleweight Valdes stopped in seven rounds in 1971. Ask Doc Holliday, whom he knocked out in four, or Kim Booker, who went in five. Look up top-rated Gratien Tonna, who lasted into the 11th, or slick Vinnie Curto, who managed to last the whole 10 rounds. And if none of those guys are available, get in touch with "Baaaad Bennie" Briscoe, that beloved old Philadelphia warrior and top middleweight contender who hung tough with every 160-pound fighter of the '70s. Valdes beat him three times, once by knockout. Any of those guys will tell you: Valdes was the goods. And he might have had it in him to become even greater than he did.

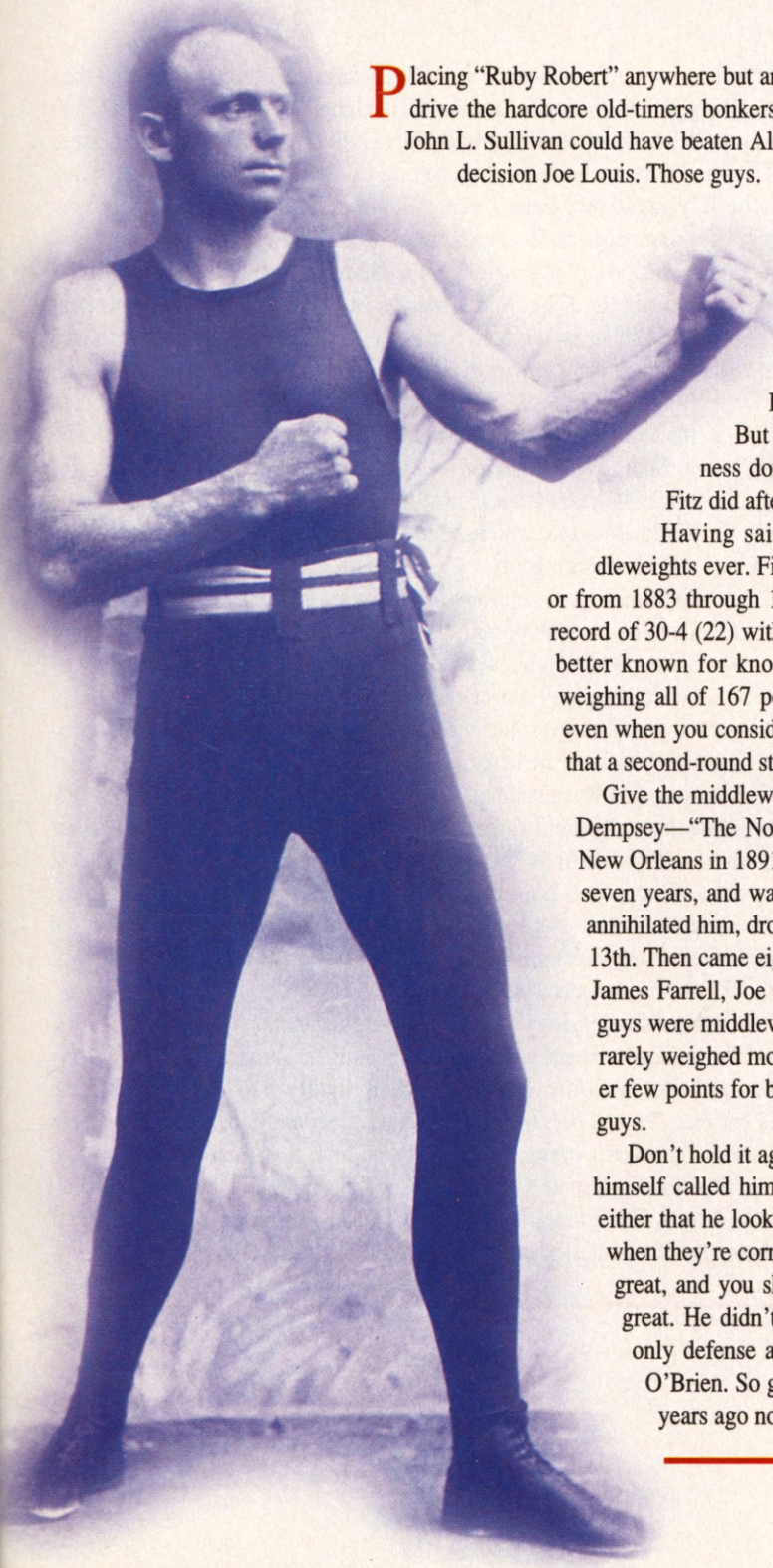
So what held Valdes back? Carlos Monzon, the dominant middleweight who fought in the same era. Valdes had his chance against him. The WBC stripped Monzon in '74 for not facing Valdes, so he and Briscoe fought for the vacant title. The two slugged away at one another until Briscoe finally wilted in the seventh, and Valdes then banged out four quick defenses, setting up the unification match with Monzon. But there is a reason Monzon is close to the top of this list and Valdes is not. The Argentine was at his impenetrable best that night in Monte Carlo and walked away with a clear-cut unanimous decision win.

Valdes returned to Cartagena and Barranquilla, where he began his career and fought primarily for the first five or six years, and scored a couple of quick knockouts before signing for the rematch with Monzon, who was 34 at this point and as ready as he ever was to be taken. They met in Monte Carlo, and it started well enough for Valdes when he dropped Monzon in the second with a long right hand. It was the first time the champion had been floored in 13 years. Valdes led on the cards before Monzon rallied over the second half of the fight and took the decision again, closer than the last time, but this ain't horse shoes.

Valdes had enough left to beat Briscoe again (this time on a razor-thin decision) and claim the title after Monzon retired. But it seemed as though he lost everything with his tormentor out of the picture. The awkward and utterly forgettable Hugo Corro decisioned and dethroned him in his first defense and beat him again seven months later. Maybe Valdes wouldn't have been an all-time great even without Monzon around. Maybe it was Monzon's presence that drove him to the success he had. Maybe Monzon wasn't his vice after all. Maybe he was Valdes' strength.

# 18 BOB FITZSIMMONS

## 40-11 (32) with 10 no-decisions, 1 no-contest
## World Champion 1891-'97



Placing "Ruby Robert" anywhere but among the top three or four all-time middleweight greats will drive the hardcore old-timers bonkers. You know who we're talking about: the guys who think John L. Sullivan could have beaten Ali and Frazier on the same night and had enough left over to decision Joe Louis. Those guys.

Certainly, Fitzsimmons' place in history will always be assured. He was boxing's first triple-crown champion, having won the middleweight, light heavyweight, and heavyweight crowns, the light heavyweight title when he was 40. Hell, the guy fought competitively until he was 50, almost 100 years before George Foreman first told us middle age wasn't a death sentence. But remember, this is about rewarding fighters who got business done at middleweight, so we're not overly interested in what Fitz did after abandoning the 160-pound weight class.

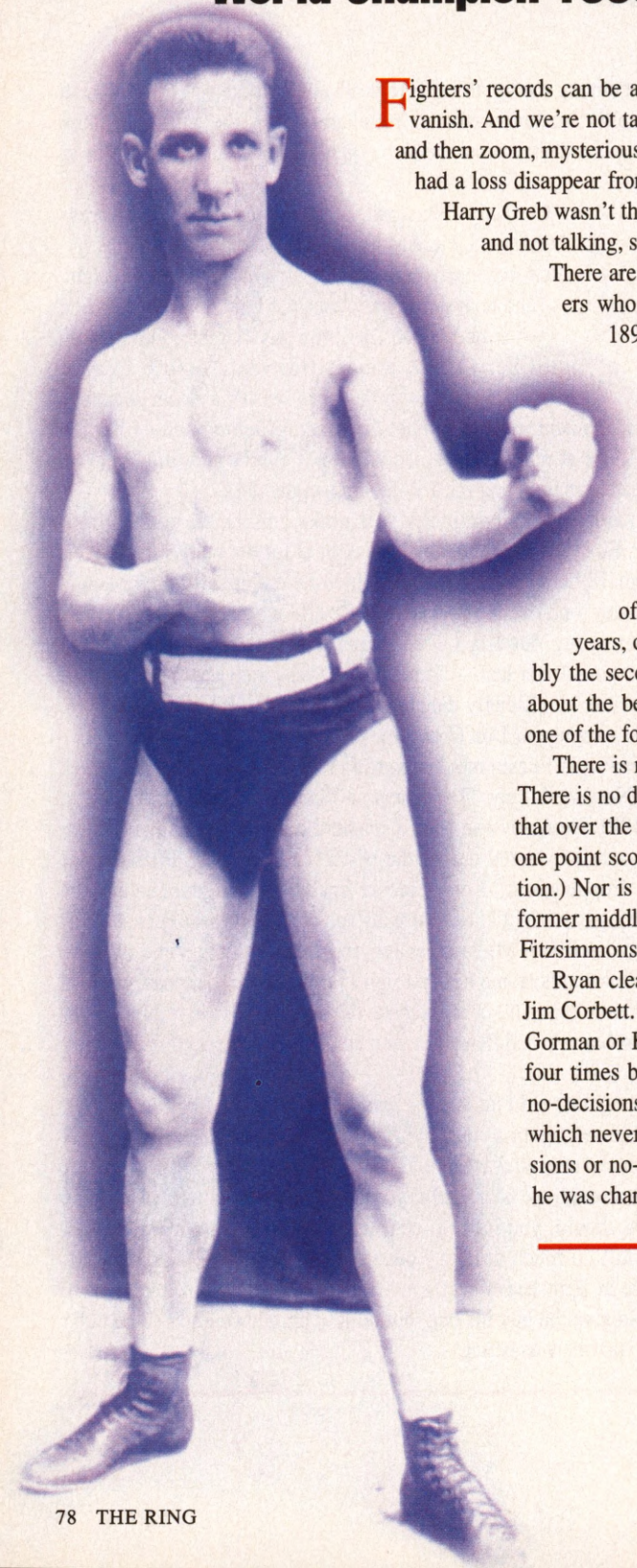
Having said that, Fitzsimmons still ranks among the top 20 middleweights ever. First, it was the weight he fought at for the bulk of his career, or from 1883 through 1895, and the weight at which he compiled a pretty sound record of 30-4 (22) with 6 no-decisions against the world's best. It's true that he's better known for knocking out Jim Corbett for the heavyweight title—while weighing all of 167 pounds no less—but he was far less active at heavyweight, even when you consider he officially defended the middleweight belt all of once, that a second-round stoppage of Dan Creedon.

Give the middleweight Fitzsimmons credit too for stopping the laudable Jack Dempsey—"The Nonpareil," not "The Manassa Mauler"—to claim the belt in New Orleans in 1891. Dempsey had been a splendid champion, held the title for seven years, and was considered one of the best of his day when Fitzsimmons annihilated him, dropping him 13 times before finally knocking him cold in the 13th. Then came eight straight knockout wins against the likes of Peter Maher, James Farrell, Joe Godfrey, Millard Zender, and Jack Warner. Some of those guys were middleweights, some heavyweights, and some in between, but Fitz rarely weighed more than 160 or so in those days anyway, so give him another few points for being a middleweight who consistently knocked over bigger guys.

Don't hold it against old Fitz that his legs were so skinny the great John L. himself called him a "fighting machine on stilts." Don't hold it against him either that he looked an awful lot like a pelican. Pelicans can get pretty nasty when they're cornered, we hear, and if you consider Fitzsimmons an all-time great, and you should, you have to consider him an all-time middleweight great. He didn't do much at heavy outside of paralyzing Corbett, and his only defense at light heavy was a no-decision against Philadelphia Jack O'Brien. So give the guy his due, but do it at middleweight, because 105 years ago no one was better.

# 19 TOMMY RYAN

## 86-3-6 (68) with 4 no-decisions, 6 no-contests
## World Champion 1898-1907



Fighters' records can be a funny thing. Wins appear and disappear, losses are recorded and then vanish. And we're not talking just about South American flyweights who are barely above .500 and then zoom, mysteriously, to the top of the IBF ratings. The grapevine said Julio Cesar Chavez had a loss disappear from his resume when he started getting exposure, and some people swore Harry Greb wasn't the only guy to beat Gene Tunney. But those who said it are all dead now and not talking, so Tunney's near-perfect record remains intact for perpetuity.

There are more versions of how long Ryan's title reign lasted that there are fighters who have sued Don King. Some sources say it went just four years, from 1898-1902. Others say he held it until '04. His record shows that he won the middleweight crown when he knocked out Jack Bonner in October '98 and never lost it in the ring, never relinquished it, and retired, as the champion, after a six-round exhibition against Battling Nelson in South Bend, Indiana, in '07. That would make his reign just under 10 years long, almost three years longer than that tallied by Carlos Monzon, who is believed by most to be the division record-holder in this regard.

Ultimately, the quibble is irrelevant because Ryan, whether he officially—that's an important word—held the title for two years, four years, or 10 years, was a middleweight light years ahead of his time and probably the second best of his era, right behind Bob Fitzsimmons. Plus, we're talking about the best 160-pounders ever, not record-holders, and Ryan easily qualifies as one of the former regardless of the length of his reign.

There is no debate that Ryan claimed the crown when he stopped Bonner in '98. There is no debate that in the following year he tallied nine wins, six by knockout, or that over the next four years, from '00 to '03, he went 23-2-1 with 19 knockouts, at one point scoring 10 stoppages in a row. (One of the two losses was by disqualification.) Nor is there any debate that in '95, he blew away in three rounds and retired former middleweight king Jack Dempsey, "The Nonpareil," the very same one it took Fitzsimmons 13 rounds to dispatch four years earlier.

Ryan cleaned out the division left behind when Fitzsimmons went chasing after Jim Corbett. No contender was spared. Not Frank Craig or Tommy West, not Johnny Gorman or Kid Carter, not Billy Stift or Cyclone Kelly. Ryan defended the title just four times between '98 and '03, but had 39 fights. He won 33 of them; three were no-decisions, and one was a draw. Do the math and look again at his overall record, which never has been in dispute. The guy had 95 bouts that didn't end in no-decisions or no-contests. Three times the other guy's hand was raised. We don't care if he was champ for 20 minutes. Records like Ryan's don't happen by accident.

# 20 JOEY GIARDELLO

## 100-25-7 (32) with 1 no-decision
## World Champion 1963-'65

It took Giardello a long, long time to become a champion—123 fights and 15 years to be exact. He was 33 already when he outsmarted Dick Tiger over 15 rounds in Atlantic City in 1963. It took so long not because he'd been frozen out of the title picture by evil forces, like Charlie Burley had and Jake LaMotta years before. It was because every time he put together a good streak and was on the verge of finally getting his shot, he blew it. He screwed up and lost fights he wasn't supposed to, and it hurt him. He wasn't consistent.

It wasn't as though Giardello wasn't used to losing. In '50, his third year as a pro, he lost three times, twice by knockout. The following year he dropped four. In '52 he drew three straight times, put together five wins, then lost to Joey Giambra, who he'd beaten a month before. No consistency. He lost twice to Billy Graham, though some cockeyed judges and the State Supreme Court said otherwise, and then decisioned the talented Harold Green. A loss to Johnny Saxton, a win over Tiger Jones. Nine wins in a row, then back-to-back losses to Charlie Cotton. Nine wins in a row—over such solid fighters as Rory Calhoun, Chico Vejar, Jones again, and Franz Szuzina—then another loss to Giambra, a knockout loss to Spider Webb, and a decision loss to Jones. Enough already. You get the picture.

Giardello split a pair of 10-rounders with Tiger in '59, and Gene Fullmer, the NBA champ, gave him a shot. The verdict? What else but a draw, which Giardello followed up with a kayo win and then three straight decision losses. Win some, lose some. A decision over the well-done Sugar Ray Robinson two years later got him the shot at Tiger. Everyone figured he was done by then himself, but he pulled it off, and people started wondering how long it would be before he lost it. Less than two years. A defense against Rubin Carter—which the majority of the press had him winning, for the record—and Tiger took it away from him again. But for all his inconsistency, Giardello won a lot more than he lost against an exceptionally deep middleweight division. And, he did it with style. That part, at least, was guaranteed.

## HONORABLE MENTIONS

*Many fine 160-pounders didn't make the cut, but are worthy of mention just the same. If we had picked the greatest 30 middleweights ever, they'd have rounded out the bottom third. They appear in alphabetical order.*

**Carmen Basilio:** Was far better at welterweight, but his 1957 win over Robinson and two wars with Fullmer can't be ignored.

**Bennie Briscoe:** You've already read about the guys who beat him. Here are some of Briscoe's victims: Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Kitten Hayward, Cyclone Hart, Tony Mundine, Vicente Rondon, Charley Scott, George Benton, Bill Douglas …

**Les Darcy:** This puncher from Down Under held the Australian middleweight and heavyweight titles simultaneously in 1916, but never fought in America.

**Jack Dempsey:** "The Nonpareil" was third-best at the turn of the century, right behind Fitzsimmons and Ryan.

**Mike Gibbons:** "The Phantom Of St. Paul" was a defensive genius who fought every good middleweight between 1908 and '22, and wasn't stopped in 114 fights.

**Rocky Graziano:** Helped make the late-1940s and early-'50s one of the most exciting periods in the sport's history and had one of the best right hands ever, especially against welterweights.

**Roy Jones:** Perhaps the most gifted middleweight ever, but he didn't stay at 160 long enough to make an impact. Plus, would he have fought Robinson if he'd had the chance?

**Carl "Bobo" Olson:** Couldn't do a thing with Robinson, but you have to give him credit for the number of times he tried and for beating a fair mix of contenders too.

**James Toney:** Do you think Toney has a kitchen in his bedroom, like Riddick Bowe did? What a waste of serious, serious talent.

**Holman Williams:** Lost to LaMotta, Cerdan, and a lot of others, but split a long-running series with Burley and probably would have been a champion in any other era. ■

# HOW RACISM CHANGED THE LIFE OF HEAVYWEIGHT WILLIE BEAN

**By Pete Ehrmann**

In 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American player in major league baseball after Brooklyn Dodgers owner Branch Rickey determined that Robinson had the self-control to keep from punching out white teammates and opponents who vehemently objected to sharing their field of dreams with a black man.

A year earlier, Willie Bean became a professional boxer because, by his own admission, "I wasn't a Jackie Robinson."

Baseball was the first love of the 6'2½", 200-pound Bean, one of eight children in his family and a native of Los Angeles. A catcher and perennial .300 hitter, Bean played on teams that won California and Pacific Coast championships. He was a natural athlete and fearless behind the plate.

"I stood so close to the batter, the guy would hit my mask when he swung on the ball," reminisced Bean. "I guess I put a lot of fear in guys; they were afraid to hit me!"

In 1943, Bean became a Marine and found out that by joining the base boxing team he "didn't have to do so much drilling." In 2½ years, he didn't lose a fight and won the All-Marine heavyweight title. Still, when his hitch was up, Bean had his sights set on a career on the baseball diamond, not in the ring.

"I was a pretty solid puncher," Bean recalled, "but I was a better baseball player than a fighter."

It was his punching, however, that caused Bean to switch careers after he landed a coveted tryout with the Hollywood Stars, one of the West Coast's best professional ball clubs, in 1946.

"My stay was very short," said Bean. "It was kind of rough being a black ballplayer then. I was called names. I didn't have that Jackie Robinson temperament. He was more mellow. I was kicked off the team because I was punching guys out."

The manager suggested that Bean try hitting people for a living instead.

"I was always confident and cocky," said Bean, "and I felt I could beat the world."

It didn't start out that way. In his first 10 bouts, the muscular Bean won only three (with three draws). Back then, though, winning all the time didn't matter as much as it does today.

"It was just a different world," said Bean. "Being a fighter, you were popular and recognized. I had a guy [manager Ralph Gambia] giving me a few dollars every week. At that time, you didn't need that much money. I was one of the first in my neighborhood with an automobile."

After winning his last four fights of '47, Bean went 8-2 the following year and became a popular main-eventer at the Hollywood Legion Stadium and Ocean Park Arena. He twice beat Baby Dutch Culbertson, whom heavyweight champion Joe Louis had called the most promising heavyweight he'd seen. Down the road, Bean would reverse losses to top-10 contender Rusty Payne and a squat, no-neck perennial contender from Anadarko, Arkansas, named Albert Thompson, who didn't fight anything like the nickname by which he was known—"Turkey."

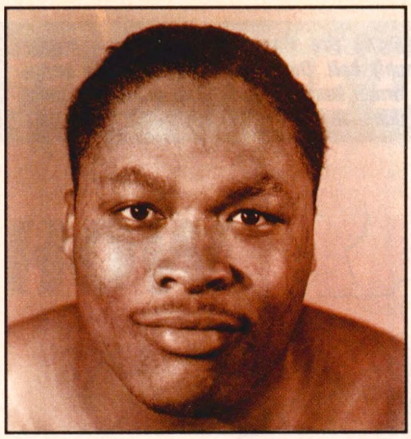
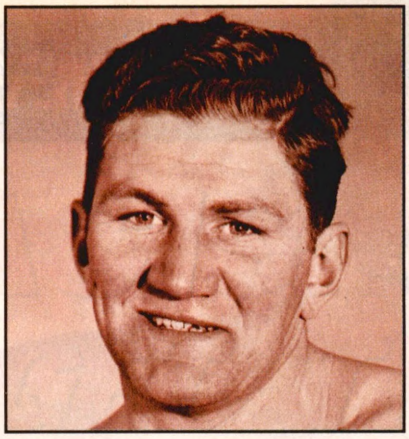
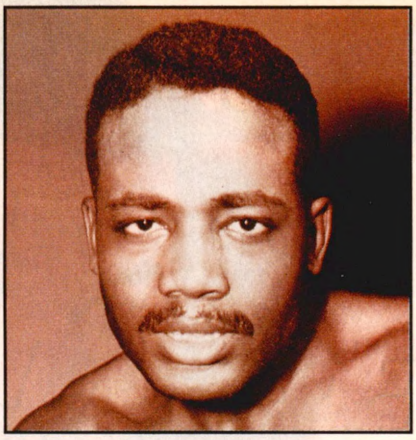
"What a left-hook artist," said Bean. "He got me with a left hook in my nose in the second round and busted me up. I started swallowing blood and got as sick as a dog, so they stopped it."

It made Bean briefly wonder who the real turkey was.

"You come home and pass blood from both ends, and it frightens the hell out of you," said Bean. "I thought, *I'm going back to baseball*. But your mind plays tricks on you. The next thing, I started training for one guy, Turkey Thompson. I wanted to get even with him."

He did four years later, knocking out Thompson in seven rounds. In the meantime, Bean headed east. In Cleveland, he lost a decision to Jimmy Bivins, the future

*Bean wearing the Pacific Coast Heavyweight Championship belt. During the late-1940s and early-'50s, the former baseball player was among the most popular fighters on the West Coast circuit.*

***Although he never got a shot at the world title, Bean beat a number of good fighters, including (from left to right) left-hook artist Turkey Thompson, tricky veteran Pat Comiskey, and tough fellow Los Angeles native Al Hoosman.***

Hall of Famer who held the "Duration" heavyweight title while Joe Louis was in the U.S. Army during World War II. In Springfield, Massachusetts, Bean beat "Tiger" Ted Lowry and Bill Gilliam, and when he entered the ring in North Adams on September 29, 1949, what he saw in the other corner prompted Bean to make an announcement to his own handlers.

"If I hurt this boy," he told them, "I'm going to the athletic commission and get all you guys arrested and put in jail."

The opponent was a tall, thin fellow called Doc Williams, whose welfare Bean was concerned about because a case of childhood polio had left Williams with a "real tiny, little-bitty leg."

Unfortunately for Bean, Williams compensated for that handicap by knocking the hell out of a lot of good, perfectly proportioned fighters en route to a ranking among the world's best light heavyweights of that time.

"I can feel the blows now," said Bean, 51 years after the beating that lasted eight rounds. "He knocked me down and cut me up. I couldn't see for two, three weeks."

It was a high, hard one right across his ego.

"You know, when you look at a guy with one leg and get the hell kicked out of you, you say, 'What's the use?' It's very discouraging."

But early in 1950 came the "thrill of a lifetime." Bean met Louis in a six-round exhibition match in Hollywood, and afterward heard "The Brown Bomber" tell Ezzard Charles, who succeeded Louis as champion, that "[Bean] could knock me out."

"Joe hit harder with the jab than anyone hit with a right hand," said Bean, who also worked as a sparring partner for Louis. "It was like walking into a pole."

That was a good year for Bean, who fought up and down the West Coast, beating former conqueror Payne twice as well as worthwhile heavyweights Kid Rivera, Al Spaulding, and Al Hoosman. There were also three bouts with an Oakland fighter named Frankie Buford, whose appearance, like that of Doc Williams, was so deceiving that once again before the fight Bean warned Gambina that "if I hurt this guy, I'm going to take you to the police and have you arrested."

According to Bean, Buford "had one eye that looked off into space, and he looked like he'd been beat up all his life. That sucker beat the s___ out of me for 10 rounds. He couldn't hurt you, but he'd slap you all over the ring."

In their subsequent meetings, Bean decisioned and knocked out Buford. In his final match of '50, Bean dropped a 12-round decision for the California state title to Clarence Henry.

***Bean was already past his prime when he dropped a 10-round decision to contender Rex Layne in October 1954. The Los Angeles fighter lost five of his next six bouts and retired in 1956.***

"It was close," said Bean. "He wouldn't fight me again, and we turned out to become the best of friends."

Fighting at Hollywood Legion Stadium was always special for Bean, who topped many cards at the famous arena whose seats were always filled with movie and show business stars. When Bean fought Pat Comiskey there on April 6, 1951, the veteran contender knocked Bean down in the second round, and what followed sounds straight out of a typical boxing screenplay from that era.

"Stay down," Comiskey told him. "You're gonna get paid anyway."

"I'm at home, brother," replied Bean. "I got to get up."

He did, and won a 10-round decision.

Bean's most memorable

fight at the Legion Stadium was on February 21, 1953, against rugged journeyman Dale Hall, who went berserk and caused a riot after Bean punched him in the ribs. While holding Bean in a deathlock, Hall cold-cocked the referee, who tried to separate them, and held off the other officials who jumped into the ring to restore order. Eventually arrested and incarcerated, Hall later said he was upset because he had been promised that Bean would leave his already sore ribs alone in the fight.

"I didn't know anything about that," said Bean. "He was actually beating me, and had closed one of my eyes. I told my corner, 'One more round,' and I went out and hit him in the body. He growled, and I said to myself, *Whoa, this is where I'm supposed to be!* Then he went completely insane."

In the early-'50s, Bean won the Pacific Coast heavyweight title and was in and out of the world rankings. He held the California championship twice, beating Young Jack Johnson and Howard King, but he also lost decisions to both, as well as Leonard Morrow and Rex Layne.

Billy Smith was a perennial 175-pound contender known as "Oakland Billy" when he was headquartered in California and "Boardwalk Billy" after relocating in the East. Known everywhere as a hellacious belter, in their July '54 fight in Atlantic City, Smith hit Bean with an uppercut as the latter's mouth was open. "I bit my tongue almost off," Bean recalled. Sickened by the blood pouring down his throat, Bean was excused in the fifth round for medical treatment.

He should've bit his tongue when Bean told his corner he intended to knock out light heavyweight champion Archie Moore in their April '56 non-title bout. Bean and Moore were friends, but that didn't count in the ring.

"I think I was handling him quite well," said Bean, "but I wanted to knock him out. I told my corner that, and they were cursing at me and telling me, 'Don't get close to the guy!'"

In the fifth, a punch sent Moore into the ropes covering up, exposing his ample midsection that was scarred from surgery.

"Archie's had about nine operations in the pit of his stomach, and everybody made the mistake of going for his body," said Bean, who fell into the same trap. "I could hear my corner screaming 'No!' as I dropped my hand to throw a right to the body—and the lights went out."

A month later, Bean traveled to Honolulu to face hometown hero Kolo "Duke" Sabedong, who later earned a footnote in ring history as the first opponent to take Muhammad Ali 10 rounds, when the future heavyweight champion was still Cassius Clay.

"He couldn't fight a little bit," said Bean of the towering Hawaiian. But promoters insisted that he carry Sabedong for 10 rounds, and after reluctantly going along with the idea, not only did Sabedong get the decision, but somebody ran off with Bean's $3,500 purse.

***In his last fight, Bean was asked to go easy on local hero Duke Sabedong, but when Bean agreed to carry the 6'7" Hawaiian giant, he lost the decision.***

That was the finale for Bean, 41-26-4 (22), who was well-off enough to open a couple of nightclubs in L.A. He did fine with them as long as he was there to personally supervise the operations.

"The minute I started to go out of town, everybody started taking from me," he said. "I had to give 'em both up."

Bean went to work for General Motors, and also worked in the construction industry before retiring in 1982. Most of his time since then has been devoted to "chasing golf balls."

Modest and well-spoken, Bean allows that if he was fighting today, "I would make some money." That's not all, insisted Don Fraser, a fixture in California boxing for many years.

"If he was around today, he'd be a champion of one of these alphabet groups," said Fraser. "Willie was built like a Greek god, and he beat some pretty fair fighters. But there was a lot more competition back then. Today, Willie would be making big bucks and get a shot at Lennox Lewis or Tyson."

Fraser is an officer of the Golden State Boxers' Association, an organization of ex-fighters that meets weekly at the Spaghetti House in Los Angeles. Several months ago, after finding out that Dale Hall was living in an area nursing home, Bean picked him up and took him to a meeting. This time nobody had to call the riot squad.

"We laughed," Bean said. "He swore he was told I wouldn't hit him in the body."

Now 72, Bean counts himself a lucky man.

"I've had a beautiful life," he said. "I'm still able to walk, talk, and do a lot of things."

He just wishes that over a half-century ago he'd been like Jackie Robinson in more ways than one.

"I kick myself in the ass all the time about that," he said. "If I had a longer fuse, I could've gotten through [the abuse]. I think I could have gone farther in baseball." ■

***Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.***

# SUMMARY

## HEAVYWEIGHTS

Evander Holyfield W 12 John Ruiz
*(Wins Vacant WBA Title)*
Cliff Etienne KO 3 Cliff Couser
Oliver McCall W 10 Sedreck Fields
David Bostice KO 1 Terry Porter
Charles Shufford KO 8 Jimmy Thunder
Eliecer Castillo W 10 Ross Puritty
Gary Bell KO 3 Darryl Becker
Richie Melito KO 1 Thomas Williams
Jacob Mofokeng KO 3 Anton Nel
Zuri Lawrence W Disq. 9 King Ipitan
Rene Monse W 12 Willi Fischer
Sergei Liakhovich W 10 Brad Rone

## CRUISERWEIGHTS

Arthur Williams KO 9 Ray Berry
Dale Brown W 8 Mike Peak
Sebastian Rothmann KO 10 Kelly Oliver
Courtney Butler KO 5 Willard Lewis
Earl Morais KO 9 Reneir Dorfling
John Kiser KO 3 Joe Escamilla

## LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Roy Jones KO 10 Eric Harding
*(Retains Unified Title)*
Glenn Kelly KO 7 Billy Lewis
Jim Crawford KO 5 David Robinson
Tyler Hughes W 10 Joe Hughes

## SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sven Ottke W 12 Charles Brewer
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Dingaan Thobela KO 12 Glenn Catley
*(Wins WBC Title)*
Joe Calzaghe KO 5 Omar Sheika
Stephane Ouellet W 10 Davey Hilton
Andrei Schkalikov W 12 Teymuraz Kikelidze
Roberto Duran W 10 P.J. Goossen
Mario Veit KO 3 Errol MacDonald
Adrian Dodson W 4 Paul Wesley

## MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Robert Allen W 10 Ron Weaver
Erland Betare W 12 Davide Ciarlante
Alex Lubo W 8 Alex Hilton

## JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Fernando Vargas KO 4 Ross Thompson
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Winky Wright W 12 Bronco McKart
Wilfredo Rivera KO 4 Gerald Coleman
J.C. Candelo W 10 Michael Lerma
Sam Garr KO 2 Miguel Aguilla
Shibata Flores KO 8 Robert Kamya
Santos Cardona W 12 Santiago Samaniego
Wayne Alexander KO 1 Paul Denton
Robert Frazier KO 4 Israel Ponce
Michael Rask KO 6 Christian Endl
Kirino Garcia KO 7 Buck Smith
Takaloo W 12 Howard Clarke
Steve Roberts KO 9 Scott Dixon
Anthony Farnell W 12 Juan Carlos Sanchez
Andrey Tsurkan KO 2 Juan Soberanes
Andrey Tsurkan KO 10 Juan Carlos Barreto
Fathi Missaoui W 8 Edward Hall

## WELTERWEIGHTS

Vernon Forrest No-Contest 3 Raul Frank
*(For Vacant IBF Title)*
Shannan Taylor KO 8 Nick Rupa
Arturo Gatti W 10 Joe Hutchinson
Hector Quiroz KO 2 Ivan Ledon
Nicolas Cervera KO 2 Ahmed Aranda
Fernando Sagrado KO 4 Efren Legaspino
Sukhyun Yun W 12 Toshiharu Kayama
Horatio Garcia KO 12 Norberto Sandoval
Nick Acevedo KO 9 John Molnar
Antonio Young W 4 Mujtabaa Muhammad
Christy Martin W 10 Dianna Lewis

## JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Paul Spadafora W 10 Rodney Jones
*(Non-Title Bout)*
Antonio Diaz W 10 Micky Ward
Ben Tackie KO 1 Fred Pendleton
Ivan Robinson D 10 Vivian Harris
Vince Phillips KO 5 Pedro Saiz
Khalid Rahilou W 8 Freddy Cruz
Justin Rowsell KO 3 Teofilo Tunacao
Emanuel Burton W 8 Gerald Gray

## LIGHTWEIGHTS

Cesar Bazan KO 3 Luis Lizarraga
Michael Ayers KO 1 Mehdi Labdouni
Julio Alvarez W 10 James Crayton
Arnulfo Castillo W 10 Roque Cassiani
Lovemore Ndou KO 1 Juan Macias
Jermaine Fields W 10 Julian Wheeler
Steve Forbes W 10 Moises Pedroza
Bobby Vanzie KO 6 Joseph Charles
Eduardo Perez KO 6 Juan Arias
Sandro Casamonica W 6 Manuel Gomez
Djamel Lifa KO 4 Antonio Luna Brito
Leonard Dorin W 10 Gary St. Clair

Julio Diaz KO 5 Awel Abdulai
Terrance Churchwell KO 2 Jose Luis Baltazar
Justo Sencion KO 3 Carlos Navarez

## JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Diego Corrales KO 3 Angel Manfredy
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Claudio Martinet W 10 Julio Pablo Chacon
Jorge Paez KO 5 Jorge Ramirez
Dennis Holbaek W 12 Boris Sinitsin
Edwin Santana W 8 Renor Rojas
Frankie Toledo W 6 Lee Cargle
William Abelyan KO 8 Shamir Reyes

## FEATHERWEIGHTS

Derrick Gainer KO 11 Fred Norwood
*(Wins WBA Title)*
Naseem Hamed KO 4 Augie Sanchez
Erik Morales KO 7 Kevin Kelley
Juan Manuel Marquez KO 7 Daniel Jimenez
Cassius Baloyi KO 1 Baudilio Hernandez
Agapito Sanchez W 10 Juan Carlos Ramirez
Phillip Ndou KO 4 Russell Stoner Jones
Hector Velazquez KO 8 Raul Perez
Tony Wehbee KO 6 Kyoshiro Fukushima
Daniel Seda KO 8 Oscar Leon
Antonio Diaz W 10 Aldo Valtierra

## JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Willie Jorrin W 12 Michael Brodie
*(Wins Vacant WBC Title)*
Marco Antonio Barrera W 12
Jose Luis Valbuena
Enrique Sanchez KO 3 Eddie Saenz
Israel Vazquez KO 3 Javier Varguez

## BANTAMWEIGHTS

Tim Austin W 12 Arthur Johnson
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Jorge Lacierva W 12 David Vazquez
Cuauhtemoc Gomez KO 4 Javier Ortiz
Johnny Bredahl W 12 Roberto Lopez
Mauricio Martinez KO 5 Lester Fuentes
Rafael Marquez KO 2 Tomas Rivera
Keiji Yamaguchi W 10 Hyun-Soong Kim
Tommy Waite KO 4 Ady Lewis
Jess Maca Tech. Draw 2 Yodsingh Chuwatana
Joel Junio KO 5 Pongkam Chosornphong
Debind Thapa KO 5 Dan Davis

## JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Masamori Tokuyama W 12 In Joo Cho
*(Wins WBC Title)*
Samson Toyota-Thailand KO 4 Roberto Moreno
Adonis Rivas W 12 Joel Luna-Zarate
Mauricio Pastrana W 12 Heriberto Ruiz
Vernie Torres W 12 Luis Perez
Martin Castillo W 10 Oscar Andrade

## FLYWEIGHTS

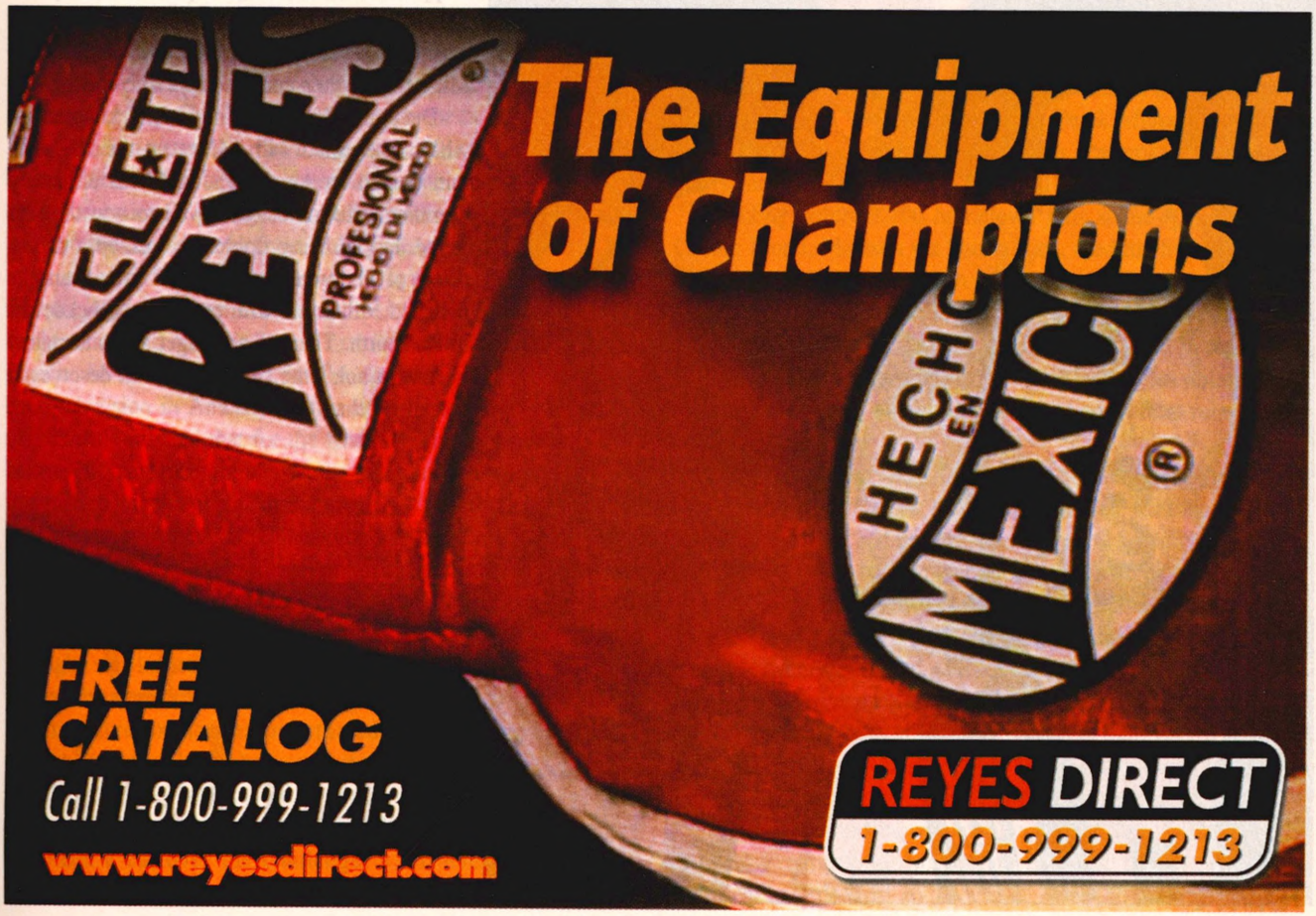
Malcolm Tunacao D 12 Celes Kobayashi
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Isidro Garcia KO 6 Jose Rafael Sosa
Oscar Arciniega KO 9 Javier Torres
Rocky Palma KO 7 Kid Payes
Hussein Hussein KO 2 Prasob Nookliang
Gabriel Mira W 10 Julio Cesar Avila
Jair Jimenez KO 4 Ilshat Saitkulov

## JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Bebis Mendoza W Disq. 7 Rosendo Alvarez
*(Wins Vacant WBA Title)*
Hugo Cazarez KO 8 Panchito Garcia
Kohki Tanaka W 12 Satoshi Yoshida

## STRAWWEIGHTS

Joma Gamboa W 12 Noel Arambulet
*(Wins WBA Title)*
Makoto Suzuki W 10 Hiroyuki Abe
Isaac Bustos Tech. Draw 2 Jesus Vargas



# RINGSIDE REPORTS

## FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

As perhaps the hottest prospect in boxing at the end of 1999, Zab Judah was often referred to as an uncrowned champion. Many considered him the best fighter in the junior welter class, even though he had barely 20 fights under his belt, hardly any of them against name opposition. How ironic it was then that when Judah claimed the IBF 140-pound title in February 2000, a good portion of the media and fans were reluctant to recognize him as a champion.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

That was because Terronn Millett still had a very legitimate claim to that throne. Millett had suffered a hand injury and had been unfairly stripped of the IBF belt, and politics subsequently supplied Judah with the vacant title. But eventually, he would have to settle the dispute with Millett. Only then could he be a *true* champion.

Despite suffering a first-round knockdown when he clashed with Millett at the Mohegan Sun Casino on August 5, Judah was ultimately dominant. He almost deserved to win the first round despite being floored, he scored a knockdown of his own in the second round, and he polished Millett off with two more knockdowns in the fourth. There is no longer any uncertainty over who holds the title. Zab Judah deserves to be called "champ."

• • • •

# Zab Judah

*Calzaghe proves himself against Sheika*

PHOTO BY GRAHAM CHADWICK/ALLSPORT

## Joe Calzaghe KO 5 Omar Sheika

*London, England:* Producing his finest performance since dominating Chris Eubank in 1997, Calzaghe, 168, Wales, confirmed his status as one of the world's top super middleweights with a fifth-round stoppage of Sheika, 167, Paterson, New Jersey, in a ferocious battle at Wembley Conference Centre. It was a clear message to the 28-year-old Calzaghe's rivals and the critics who questioned his ability. His tremendous control and power proved too much for the 23-year-old Sheika, 19-2 (13), whose eyes were cut badly while he sustained relentless punishment on the ropes, prompting American referee Gino Rodriguez to intervene at 2:08 of the fifth round. Sheika protested, but his manager, Steve Lott, acknowledged afterward that he had no reason to complain.

A succession of poor performances, caused by persistent hand and arm injuries, have blighted Calzaghe's progress since his halcyon night in Sheffield three years ago when he outpointed Eubank. Against former British champion David Starie in January, on the undercard of Mike Tyson's two-round destruction of Julius Francis, he ruined his chances of making an impact on coast-to-coast television in America with a slowly paced, depressing display. But he insisted that for the first time since the Eubank fight he was 100 percent right physically and predicted he would be the first man to knock Sheika out.

Though the American remained on his feet, Calzaghe's victory was emphatic. He asserted his authority from the start, putting Sheika on the defensive with telling use of his left hand in close, while the challenger tried to take refuge in several clinches. Calzaghe was inflicting serious damage, but Sheika proved willing to meet the aggressive terms of engagement.

Explosive exchanges punctuated the enthralling, closely fought rounds. Calzaghe's granite jaw—he has never been knocked down—was tested severely by hard combinations delivered with unerring accuracy by Sheika in rounds three and four. But a cut over the challenger's left eye, caused by an accidental clash of heads, heightened the desperation in his work. It was also to prove decisive.

Having weathered Sheika's early assault in the fifth, Calzaghe responded with a barrage of blows that shook his opponent. Two powerful left hands and a right sent Sheika's legs in opposite directions, and he did well to stay on his feet. Calzaghe sustained his assault until the referee correctly decided Sheika could take no more.

Calzaghe will face mandatory challenger Mario Veit next and said he is looking ultimately to unify the division.

Promoter: Frank Warren

(8-12-00)

*Brian Doogan*

## Eric Morel W 12 Sornpichai Pisnurachank

*Madison, Wisconsin:* Morel had seen the tape of Sornpichai wresting the WBA flyweight title from Leo Gamez 10 months before. He saw Sornpichai staggering around, nearly finished, when he launched the Arturo Gatti-like left hook that flattened Gamez. So he knew what to expect from the Thai champion, and he knew what not to do. The game plan was simple: Jab and move, use angles, score and get out, and no matter how hurt Sornpichai seems, don't give him any openings.

The 24-year-old Morel followed the prescribed strategy flawlessly, and the result was a near-shutout decision that made "Little Hands Of Steel" the fourth member of the 1996 U.S. Olympic team to claim a world title. He was perhaps a bit overly tentative at times from an entertainment perspective, but in terms of assuring a victory, his execution was brilliant. Judges Derek Milham (Australia), James Boll (USA), and Gustavo Padilla (Panama) rewarded him with tallies of 120-107, 118-109, and 117-109, respectively.

Fighting before 3,700 hometown fans at the Alliant Energy Center, Morel, Madison via Puerto Rico, used his five-inch height advantage and four-inch reach advantage to control the southpaw champion from the get-go. Morel, 111, won the first round with little more than his sharp jab, but he opened up more in the second and scored with an excellent right that, aided by an unintentional trip, sent the flailing Thai down for a brief count from referee Dick Bartman (USA).

The situation worsened for the 26-year-old Sornpichai, 111¾, in the third. A stiff right staggered him, and Morel's followup assault to the body and head threatened to end Sornpichai's second title defense early, but displaying commendable discipline, Morel eased off on the dangerous champion. Sornpichai's aggressive yet plodding style made the next few rounds close, as he perpetually moved forward and scored with occasional wild blows while Morel calmly pecked at him. Sornpichai was tiring, though, as evidenced by a tumble to the canvas after a wild miss in the sixth.

Morel hurt the Thailander again in the seventh with a right-left combination, but the diminutive champ kept coming. Morel simply continued to jab and move expertly until the final bell, sweeping the closing rounds while Sornpichai, 19-1 (16), chased him in frustration. When the fight ended, Morel, 27-0 (16), collapsed to the

Slick Morel eludes a wild right from Sornpichai

PHOTO BY MIKE DE VRIES

canvas in a moving outpouring of emotion, knowing even the most corrupt judges in the world could not take this decision from him.

Unfortunately for Morel, his options now that he has the title are limited. Trips to Asia will be necessary if he is to find credible challengers at 112 pounds, so don't be surprised to see him return soon to the 115-pound class—where he has done most of his pro campaigning—for an attractive fight with Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(8-5-00)

## Bones Adams KO 6 Andres Fernandez

*Madison, Wisconsin:* What had looked, on paper, like the obligatory first-defense gimme for WBA super bantamweight champion Adams turned into a bloody slugfest, thanks to a spirited, hard-charging performance by his unheralded challenger. But facial injuries and Adams' tenacious counters proved too much for Fernandez, who was stopped on the advice of the ringside physician at the 2:23 mark of the sixth round at the Alliant Energy Center.

Adams, 40-3-3 (19), sidelined by a hand injury since winning the title from Nestor Garza in March 2000, seemed slightly taken aback by Fernandez' headfirst rushes. Although he absorbed some shots on the way in, the challenger applied steady pressure, forced Adams into the ropes, and lashed out with left hooks and rights whenever the opportunity presented itself. By the end of the first round, there was already a slight swelling under Adams' left eye, although it was difficult to tell if it was caused by a punch or Fernandez' head.

Fernandez, 121¾, Albuquerque, New Mexico, was having another fairly successful session in the second when an accidental clash of heads ripped open a long gash on his left cheek. Adams, 122, Henderson, Kentucky, quickly took advantage, connecting with a left hook and a right uppercut.

The third featured brisk, two-way action. There were several energetic exchanges, with Fernandez more than holding his own. At one point, a left knocked Adams off-balance, but by the end of the round, the challenger had a nick on the side of his right eye to add to his misery.

Fernandez, 16-6 (14), also had a solid session in the fourth, keeping the pressure on and connecting with enough punches to win his second straight round on THE RING's scorecard. At this juncture, Adams was also cut over his right eye, and Fernandez' corner told him that he "had the fight won" and that he was "gonna be the next champion."

But it wasn't to be. After getting rocked by a right early in the fifth, Adams, 26, took control of the fight with a beautiful right hand that landed flush, dazed Fernandez, and tore open a cut above his left eye. Guts and a few judicious clinches allowed Fernandez, 27, to survive the round, but his face now resembled something out of a slasher flick.

Fernandez bravely launched a final attack at the start of the sixth, but was soon on the receiving end of Adams' stinging counters. Eventually, the gore flowing down Fernandez' face forced referee Monte Oswald to call timeout and ask the doctor to inspect the challenger's wounds. They were deemed too serious to allow the fight to continue, and Adams was declared a TKO winner.

Adams, who admitted to being "stunned for a second" in the third, said he thought he had reinjured his right hand, so another lengthy period of inactivity is possible.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(8-5-00)

## Yory Boy Campas KO 8 Tony Ayala

*San Antonio, Texas:* In perhaps the best fight yet in the two-year run of ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, Campas and Ayala gave their all and produced a fight rife with blistering exchanges, turning tides, blood, bruises, and compelling human drama. In the end, Ayala's 20-year unbeaten streak was unexpectedly halted when he surrendered on his stool following the eighth round, while former world champion Campas' sputtering career was instantaneously revived.

After a layoff of 17 years due to incarceration for a rape conviction, the once-promising Ayala returned to the ring in August '99, and had bowled over five pretenders before meeting his first real test in Campas. The Mexican veteran, though nine years younger than Ayala at 28, was considered battle-worn and nearly finished after his TKO loss to Oba Carr in March 2000, and subsequently was pegged as the underdog against "El Torito." But it was speed that had conquered Campas in his recent defeats, something Ayala doesn't boast an abundance of, making him just the opponent Yory Boy needed—not the other way around as many had expected.

Ayala, 157½, San Antonio, started well, landing his sharp, straight punches in combination before Campas, 157¾, could get his own arms churning. In the first round, Ayala shook Campas with a sequence of four consecutive right hands, but it was Campas who rocked the favorite of the crowd of more than 10,000 at the Freeman Coliseum with a left hook just before the bell. The second round was the one that told you this fight was going to be something special, as there was hardly a two-second stretch in which somebody wasn't landing serious leather (more often, it was

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

*Campas and Ayala exchange blows in a classic punchout*

Ayala), and the three minutes seemed to breeze by much too quickly.

In the third, the momentum began to swing, as Campas knocked out Ayala's mouthpiece and later scored with a series of left hooks to the body while Ayala covered up along the ropes. It was also in this round that, Ayala later revealed, he had broken his left hand. Still, he regained control in round four, and when Campas returned to his corner at the end of the fifth with a cut over the left eye from a clash of heads, his face showed the same frustration as when he threw in the towel against Carr and Fernando Vargas.

But Campas soldiered on and did some excellent work in the breath-taking sixth, even with blood pouring down his face. By round's end, Ayala had a cut of his own along the right eye, and both of his eyes were beginning to show swelling. With the Texan's early lead more or less evaporated, Campas took over for good in the seventh, clearly hurting Ayala with bodyshots and battering him with both fists over the final minute. A huge right knocked Ayala back in the eighth, and another series of bodyshots followed. The ex-convict continued to fight back, but his pride was extinguished by the sight of Campas walking through his best shots, and when he returned to his corner after the round, the plug was wisely pulled. The broken hand was the official excuse, but the painful body work and the knowledge that he couldn't win seemed more responsible for Ayala's surrender.

In one of the most dramatic scenes witnessed in a boxing ring in recent years, a teary-eyed Ayala, 27-1 (24), looked at his father/trainer, Tony Sr., and said, "I'm sorry," before hiding his emotions behind a bloody towel. The elder Ayala responded, "You have nothing to be sorry for." Indeed he didn't. HBO has expressed an interest in televising the can't-miss rematch, though Campas, 75-4 (64), may try for a title shot against WBC 154-pound champ Francisco Castillejo instead.

Promoter: Lester Bedford

(7-28-00)

## Tim Austin W 12 Arthur Johnson

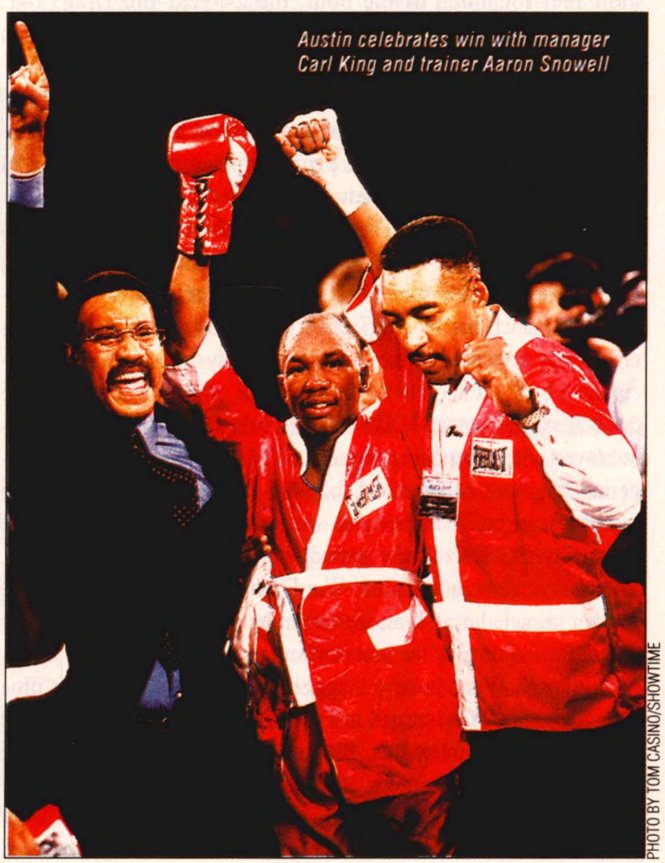
*Las Vegas, Nevada:* Austin didn't have his finest hour when he defended the IBF bantamweight championship against Johnson at the Parisian Ballroom in the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino, but he didn't need it. He didn't need anywhere close to his best.

Even a so-so Austin, making his fifth title defense, was far too much for Johnson, who couldn't back up his boastful prefight comments with his performance in the ring. Johnson fought a cautious, defensive fight, clearly wary of Austin's power, and managed to hear the final bell while standing on his feet. But that was all that went right for Johnson. Austin won every round, posting unanimous shutout marks of 120-108 on the scorecards of Las Vegas judges Chuck Giampa, Bill Graham, and Paul Smith, and easily retained the title.

Afterward, a downcast Austin was soaking his left hand in a bucket of ice, trying to reduce the swelling. He wasn't particularly thrilled, but a win was a win.

"I thought I would knock him out, but I never was able to get the punches off that I needed to," Austin, 21-0-1 (19), said. "He knew what he was doing defensively and he stuck to the game plan. He was difficult to hit."

But the hard-punching Austin, 117¾, Orwell, Ohio, hit him plenty, which was proven by Johnson's grotesquely swollen face.



*Austin celebrates win with manager Carl King and trainer Aaron Snowell*

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Johnson, 117, O'Fallon, Illinois, took enough left hands from the southpaw champion to last three fights. Johnson never visited the canvas, but he admitted he felt Austin's power.

"He was extremely strong," Johnson, 20-5 (12), said. "He was definitely the strongest guy I fought. He hit me pretty good a couple of times, and I definitely felt it."

Prior to the fight, both Johnson and his trainer, Angelo Dundee, had predicted a knockout win. Throughout the fight, Dundee hollered at his fighter in irritation to get busier. The 34-year-old Johnson often didn't get off, though Dundee wasn't willing to blame his fighter 100 percent for that.

"There are two guys in there," Dundee said. "I think Arthur would have knocked him out if he had hit him, but you have to give Austin credit."

Austin, 29, said he wanted to unify the bantamweight title before moving up to junior featherweight.

The referee was Joe Cortez (USA).

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(8-11-00)

*Kevin Iole*

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

***Diaz rattles Ward with a right uppercut***

## Antonio Diaz W 10 Micky Ward

*Ledyard, Connecticut:* In a blood-splattered, old-fashioned donnybrook that had the capacity crowd at the Foxwoods Casino on their feet for much of the bout, the 24-year-old Diaz, 141, Coachella, California, via Mexico, won a hard-fought decision over 34-year-old local favorite and perennial contender Ward, 140, Lowell, Massachusetts. Neither fighter gave an inch in the action-packed brawl, which was fought at a breakneck pace from beginning to end and served as a prime appetizer for the Naseem Hamed-Augie Sanchez slugfest.

Prior to the bout, the Diaz camp said their main concern was not getting caught by one of Ward's vaunted left hooks to the liver. Their strategy was to spin out of harm's way as soon as Ward prepared to launch his most effective punch. By watching countless tapes, they noticed that the debilitating bodyshot was always precipitated by a left hook to the head, not the other way around. Once the bell rang, however, Diaz showed little concern of any kind as he stayed within punching distance of Ward throughout, often peppering his more experienced foe with rapid-fire combinations to the head and body. Fighting at such close quarters, many of the combinations were actually started with highly effective uppercuts. The always game and gallant Ward, who could conceivably have another miracle left in him, seemed to be just a bit too slow getting off for the majority of the raucous bout.

Although Ward briefly staggered Diaz, who was only nine years old when Ward turned pro in 1985, on several occasions, the winner was never in trouble. By the third round, he was no longer even afraid of Ward's hook, and seemed to gain more confidence and momentum with every round.

"The first two rounds, I felt very comfortable, but by the third round I was totally confident," said the jubilant victor, who raised his record to 33-2 (22). "As tough and dangerous as Ward is, I wasn't afraid to take chances. He's got a granite chin, but I knew I was younger, faster, and stronger than he was."

Because the junior welterweight class is chock full of fledgling superstars, Ward, 35-10 (26), could make a good living as the gatekeeper to the upper echelons of the division. A deep cut between his eyes from an eighth-round uppercut necessitated a trip to the hospital to be stitched up. Although Diaz was also cut, on his left brow, it required no medical attention.

"Micky took a lot of unnecessary punishment tonight," said Ward's brother and trainer, Dickie Ecklund. "He has always been in wars and could still give anybody trouble, but you have to wonder when it's time to go. We'll still fight anybody out there, Hector Camacho Jr., Kostya Tszyu, but the money has to be right. He's almost 35 now and still fights like Micky from the old days, so he has to get paid what he's worth."

Ward reportedly earned $200,000 for the Diaz bout.

Although referee Steve Smoger (USA) deducted a point from Diaz in round seven for a low blow, he was still awarded a unanimous decision. Judges Melvina Lathan (USA) and Tom Kazmarek (USA) scored the bout 96-93, while Glenn Feldman (USA) saw it 95-94.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Prince Promotions, Banner Promotions

(8-19-00)

*Robert Mladinich*

## Bebis Mendoza W Disq. 7 Rosendo Alvarez

*Las Vegas, Nevada:* Former 105-pound champion Alvarez decided prior to his fight with Mendoza that he would go to the body, early and often. The result was a championship—for Mendoza.

Alvarez was disqualified by referee Mitch Halpern (USA) after a series of low blows, most of which were well below the belt, handing the vacant WBA light flyweight championship to

Mendoza. Halpern stopped the bout at 1:02 of the seventh round after an Alvarez hook landed just below the belt line. Halpern had previously taken two points from Alvarez, one in the second and one in the third. He had spent much of the rest of the night warning Alvarez, 108, Nicaragua, for punches that were either at or below the belt line. When Alvarez threw the hook in the seventh and it landed just low, Halpern said he had seen enough.

"The bottom line is the guy was getting hit below the belt, and we have rules and regulations that have to be enforced," Halpern said. "I called two points on him, warned him five other times, and after that, it was enough."

Alvarez, 30, was favored to win the fight, which was hastily arranged for the vacant title after champion Pichit C. Siriwat was unable to defend because of illness. The winner was ordered to fight Siriwat within 120 days.

That was expected to be Alvarez, but Mendoza, 107½, Colombia, stood in front of him and outpunched him for much of the fight. At the time of the stoppage, judges Patricia Jarman-Manning (USA), Jerry Roth (USA), and Jose Laurino (Uruguay) all had Mendoza, 27-0 (23), ahead. Laurino favored the 24-year-old Mendoza 59-54, while the other two judges each called it 57-55, and would have had it even were it not for the low blow penalties.

Alvarez said he thought Mendoza's trunks were too high and that the punches were legal. He said he was upset with the stoppage because the fight was going the way he wanted.

"Another round or two and I would have stopped him," Alvarez, 27-2-1 (17), said. "It was clear the thing was going my way and he just couldn't take it."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(8-12-00)

*Kevin Iole*

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

***Alvarez' low blows cost him dearly against Mendoza***

## Malcolm Tunacao D 12 Celes Kobayashi

*Tokyo, Japan:* Unbeaten Filipino southpaw Tunacao, 111½, barely kept the WBC flyweight title as he was held to a split draw by Japanese lefty Kobayashi, 111½, over 12 grueling heats.

The combatants mixed it up from beginning to end. Tunacao, making his first defense, got off to a good start, but Kobayashi, an excellent bodypuncher, fought back with persistent retaliations from the third round on. Tunacao was penalized twice for headbutts by referee Jay Nady (USA), in the sixth and again in the ninth.

Having fallen behind due in part to the point deductions, Tunacao sensed the urgency and came on over the last three sessions to retain the belt. Judge David Chung (Korea) scored it 115-113 for Tunacao, Anek Hongtongkam (Thailand) had it 115-112 for Kobayashi, and Carol Castellano (USA) saw it a stalemate, 113-113. The verdict moved the champion's record to 11-0-1 (7), while Kobayashi's now stands at 22-4-3 (13).

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(8-20-00)

*Joe Koizumi*

## Joma Gamboa W 12 Noel Arambulet

*Tokyo, Japan:* Hard-punching Filipino Gamboa, 105, acquired the WBA minimumweight throne on a split decision over Venezuelan footworker Arambulet, 106½, in a rematch to the October '99 bout in which Arambulet captured the vacant title. Arambulet, 26, who made just one successful defense, had forfeited the WBA belt on the scale due to his failure to make the 105-pound class limit, so only the 27-year-old Gamboa could have walked away as champ.

Gamboa, 29-5-1 (20), avenged his previous wide points defeat, as he kept stalking Arambulet, 12-2-1 (7), with his improved left hand. The ex-champ occasionally responded with his light but busy combinations, but Gamboa effectively shook him up with desperate combos to confirm his victory.

Judges Moohong Moon (Korea) and Derek Milham (Australia) both scored it for Gamboa, by tallies of 116-114 and 116-115, respectively, while Harmodio Cedeno (Panama) had it 116-115 for Arambulet. The referee was Kazunobu Asao (Japan).

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(8-20-00)

*Joe Koizumi*

## Vivian Harris D 10 Ivan Robinson

*Atlantic City, New Jersey:* After 10 compelling rounds at the Tropicana Casino Resort, the story was neither Harris, the 22-year-old prospect who bounced back impressively from his first pro loss, nor Robinson, the 29-year-old veteran who reaffirmed his reputation as one of boxing's gutsiest warriors by slugging it out with his younger, bigger opponent. Instead, the hot topic afterward was New Jersey's controversial majority scoring system, which turned a close unanimous decision for Harris into a draw that left the young New Yorker—not to mention ESPN2's Teddy Atlas—fuming.

In the official scoring of the three American judges, Al DeVito had it 95-93, Debra Barnes saw it 95-94, and Luis Rivera scored it 96-93, all for Harris. But under the majority

system, which eliminates the dissenting vote in rounds in which the judges were not in agreement, the final tally was 94-94. Opinions were varied at ringside, with Atlas giving Robinson just one round—the third, in which he scored a flash knockdown—on the way to a 97-91 tally for Harris. THE RING disagreed strongly with the respected color analyst, initially scoring the bout 95-93 for Robinson (who was seen as the winner by much of the press), then amending that score to read 94-94—the same on each round as the official master scorecard—after viewing the tape the next day.

Harris, 138, Brooklyn via Guyana, took command in the early going, jabbing effectively and landing clean combinations to the body and head against a flat Robinson, 138, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After losing the first two rounds on all cards, "Mighty Ivan's" plight worsened early in the third when he was thumbed in the right eye. Robinson backed into the ropes looking for a timeout, but referee Steve Smoger (USA) told him he had to fight on, so he clinched several times and then gained valuable recovery time when Harris lost his mouthpiece. When the action resumed, Robinson, his eye swelling rapidly, began fighting with passion, and a short right hand to the temple caused Harris' glove to touch down for an official knockdown.

The pace slowed in the fourth, a round in which Robinson's subtle defensive moves were on display as he did the less obvious but more effective work. The fifth, sixth, and seventh were all Harris rounds, as "Vicious Vivian" landed numerous crosses, uppercuts, and bodyshots against the backpedaling veteran. Harris appeared to tire, though, late in the seventh, and lost his mouthpiece again just before the bell.

The eighth was probably Robinson's best round. The Philly warrior scored with a double hook, then a three-punch combination, and Harris' mouthpiece came out again following an overhand right. After a timeout, Harris lost the mouthpiece again—not necessarily an intentional move, but an effective time-buyer nonetheless—and Smoger chose at the end of the round to deduct a crucial point from the lanky Guyanan. Robinson arguably stole the ninth round with his best punch of the fight, a picturesque right to the jaw, but the 10th was all Harris, with Robinson having little left in the way of offense. Both men thought they won—Robinson raising his arms for the last 10 seconds, Harris leaping on the ropes at the final bell—but neither got their wish.

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

***Harris catches Robinson with a right en route to controversial draw***

"I did what I had to do to win the fight," Harris, 16-1-1 (13), said. "The judges just took the fight out from me, and that's not right at all."

"In the sixth or seventh round, my corner started telling me I had to pick it up, and I thought I pulled the late rounds out," Robinson, 29-4-1 (11), said. "I'm a warrior, I'm experienced, and I thought I did enough to win, but I guess I could've hustled a little more."

Promoter: Main Events
(8-11-00)
*Eric Raskin*

## Vernon Forrest No-Contest 3 Raul Frank

*Las Vegas, Nevada:* Frank had a nasty cut on the top of his head that required more than 20 stitches to close, but it was Forrest who was in tears after their IBF welterweight title fight at the Mandalay Bay Hotel & Casino.

Frank and Forrest were fighting for the title vacated by Felix Trinidad, but a clash of heads in the third round left a huge gash on the right side of Frank's head, rendering him unable to continue. Blood spurted from the wound and poured down Frank's face.

"There was no way you could think about letting it continue, the cut was so bad," referee Kenny Bayless (USA) said.

As a result, because four rounds were not completed, under the unified rules the bout was declared a no-contest. While Frank was the IBF's number-one contender and Forrest was rated number two, Forrest was a 30-1 favorite, and couldn't keep his emotions in check at the postfight news conference.

"It hurts so much because I worked so hard to be a world champion," Forrest, 31-0 (25) with 1 no-contest, said, turning away several times as he was overcome by emotion.

Not much had happened in the two completed rounds, as both fighters seemed content to stay on the outside and try to measure the other. One judge had given Forrest, 147, Augusta, Georgia, both rounds, while the other two scored it one apiece. But the scorecards didn't matter after the clash of heads at 1:45 of the third, which came as an unintentional result of Forrest's corner urging him to go more to the body. Forrest ducked down and came forward with his head as he threw a left hook to the body. Frank, 146½, Brooklyn, New York, was apparently starting to throw a left as well when the heads collided.

Both immediately stepped backward and turned away, in obvious pain. Forrest, 29, was stunned but not cut; the 31-year-old Frank, though, had a huge gash that was spurting blood. He later said he thought Forrest butted him on purpose, a point made much more vehemently by his trainer, Al Bonani, who said Forrest had been butting Frank, 23-3-1 (12) with 1 no-contest, throughout the first two rounds and argued that Forrest should have been disqualified for an intentional foul. Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission, dismissed that notion.

"There is no question it was an accidental headbutt," Ratner said.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Main Events
(8-26-00)
*Kevin Iole* ■

# New Face

*(Continued from page 18)*

could get me in the gym three times a week. I was just lazy. I did a lot of growing up the last few years. I have a lot of responsibilities now. When I was young, growing up, I had that sort of drug user's mentality, I guess, even though I wasn't a user. I just wanted to have fun, meet girls, and live for the moment. But it's different now. I've never trained like this before in my life. I never ran before. My father used to try to spy on me to see if I was running. I would run down the corner, splash some water on my face, and come back and say I was finished. I'm finding running is not as bad as it used to be."

Part of Acevedo's new-found incentive can occasionally be heard in the background when he speaks on the phone, in the form of gurgling sounds coming from his newborn son Elijah. He has four children (two boys and two girls), ranging in age from nine years to five months. When it comes to raising children, Acevedo has two glaring references to choose from between his mother and his father, Tito, whom Acevedo credits for saving his life.

"It used to be embarrassing; my mother was nodding out on the streets, and other kids would see this and just make fun of me," Acevedo recalled. "My dad came and picked me up early in my life and put discipline in my life. I doubt I'd be alive today, or I'd be in jail, if it wasn't for my father.

"You never want to forget where you come from. My father is a hard worker and he did a helluva job for me and my brothers and sister. He worked two, three jobs just to take care of us. Now I have to take care of mine. I want to work hard for my kids to have a better future. But I still want to enjoy myself with what I'm doing."

Acevedo has been boxing since he was three, when his father used to take him to the gym. Acevedo is one of eight boys, five of whom boxed at one time or another. In 1992, Nick and two of his brothers, George and Danny, became the first trio of brothers to ever win New York Golden Gloves titles in the same tournament.

When Acevedo turned pro, those keeping an eye on the New York boxing scene saw star potential. That quickly faded. Acevedo struggled to get fights and battled a nagging dislocated tendon in his right middle knuckle. As time passed, Acevedo became an afterthought, taking 1995 and '96 off entirely. Finally, a New York City salesman by the name of Noah Pacifico stepped in, became his manager, and resurrected his career.

Respected boxing people close to Pacifico questioned his move, calling Acevedo a mutt who would steal his money and was not willing to work. But Pacifico opted to take a chance anyway. He signed Acevedo in late-December 1999. What convinced Pacifico that years of apathy could be changed in such a short span of time?

"What I look at is the consistency in Nicky's work ethic and his discipline now," Pacifico said. "Everyone can say they're more accountable and they want to change, but the proof is the training he's put in, and what he's doing today, and what he's doing tomorrow. I had my doubts in the beginning. I used to have to call up and make sure Nicky was there at the gym. It's not like that anymore. He's on time to the gym every day. He's gained a tremendous amount of my trust."

The Acevedo-Molnar fight was an old-fashioned slugfest, with the limited yet very tough Molnar always pressing. Acevedo displayed a quick jab that seemed to constantly find Molnar's head. In the second round, Acevedo ruptured a tendon in his left hand, but persevered. His work rate, criticized in the past, was steady. After pounding Molnar, 16-1-1 (9), for most of eight rounds and nearly shutting his right eye, Acevedo connected with a perfect shot to the chin late in the ninth, stunning Molnar and forcing referee Lindsay Page to call a halt to the bout at the 2:13 mark.

"Nick is starting to show the promise everyone always thought he had," said Dave Bontempo, who substituted for Bob Papa as blow-by-blow man for ESPN2 that night. "A lot was expected of Acevedo coming up, so I think his career is just starting. Stylistically, this was a party for Acevedo. He showed quick hands and a lot of poise against someone who comes straight at him."

After the Molnar victory, Pacifico felt vindicated about signing Acevedo. There is, however, a lingering feeling among some that Acevedo could regress back into his old ways. Pacifico thinks otherwise.

"Nicky's options are very limited, and he's finally realized he has a better chance in boxing than anything else in his life right now," Pacifico said. "He knows boxing is his way out." ■

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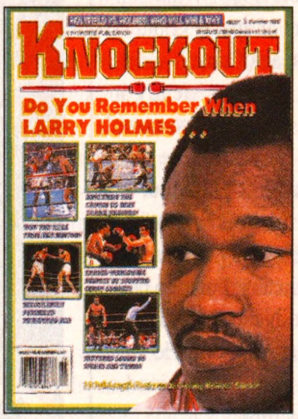


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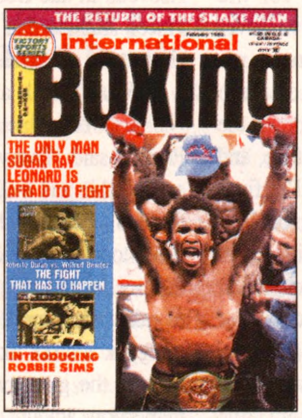


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# IBF Trial

*(Continued from page 35)*

under today isn't working the way it should be working," Homansky said.

In New Jersey, Lee faces a probable term of roughly three years in jail, and still faces a civil trial on the matter, so he is far from home free. U.S. Attorney Robert Cleary, who prosecuted the case, said the outcome of the criminal case would have no impact on plans to pursue a civil case against Lee. The purpose of the civil case is to bar Lee from ever regaining power in the IBF and to maintain a government-appointed monitor.

"Basically," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Jose Sierra, "to make sure the IBF runs corruption-free."

Given that the burden of proof in a civil case is substantially less than it is in a criminal case, there is a good chance the government will be able to secure more victories, considering the facts will be the same as they were in the criminal case.

The convictions against Lee, plus whatever happens in the civil case, should have some impact on containing the rampant corruption plaguing the sport. King, though, wouldn't concede boxing is corrupt, but he defiantly said he would succeed regardless of what was happening.

"You tell me what the rules are, and I'll play by those rules and I'll win," King said. "That's what upsets all these people like Bob Arum. He is a Harvard-educated former U.S. Attorney, and I'm just a dumb numbers runner from the streets in Cleveland, and I kick his ass every which way you can imagine. Bob Arum cannot stand that. I'm beating him at what should be his game and I'm the only one here who hasn't admitted to doing all these illegal things. I play by their rules and I win, and that bothers them. But if they change the rules, I'll beat them at those rules, too, because I'm good."

Cleary, not surprisingly, was disappointed at the not-guilty verdicts on the racketeering charges against Lee Sr. But he pointed out that the six charges Lee was convicted on—two counts of tax evasion, three counts of interstate travel to aid racketeering, and one count of money laundering—were serious offenses. He said those convictions alone would be a deterrent to someone thinking of trying to corrupt the sport further.

Arum, though, had his doubts. He said he is hopeful the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, signed into law by President Clinton earlier this year, will help, but said he's not sure the IBF case will be the impetus for widespread reform.

"From a business standpoint, there aren't rules in boxing like you have in other sports," Arum said. "In the other sports, you have a uniform set of procedures and standards that must be followed. Not so in boxing. Thus, what you have is almost like an every-man-for-himself situation.

"I can't see how what happened here will reign that in. I sincerely hope that it will. But until we really have a way to bring these sanctioning bodies in and ask them why this guy is rated ahead of that guy and get them to explain what they're doing, I don't know how things will change."

Lee charged that one of the problems with the prosecution of the IBF in the first place is that things hadn't changed, at least with regard to the social climate in this country. Lee, who is black, alleged that the case was pursued because of his race and said it would not have been had he been white. King, who said he felt there was some racism involved, said his fervent hope is that the sport can recover from the trial.

"At least now maybe people will finally understand Bob Arum for who he really is," King said. "Mr. Lee is a good man, and I felt sorry he was convicted on anything. All of these confessed criminals and bribers and corrupters, to me, it was un-American. You can't run with the hares and hunt with the hounds.

"You can't connive and scheme and be a part of the creation of the corruption and then be a hero and be the eradicator of it. It doesn't ring true. The answer is, don't do this in the first place. If you don't do it, then you don't have to worry about someone finding out later, and maybe boxing has a chance to move onward and upward and get a bigger piece of the universe."

How ironic that King, the man many considered the government's main target, was in a position to lay claim to the moral high ground after the trial was over. Only in America! ■

***Kevin Iole covers boxing for the Las Vegas Review-Journal and is a regular contributor to this magazine.***

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*— Sports Illustrated (May 15, 2000)*

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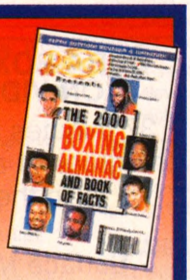


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# Evander Holyfield

*(Continued from page 57)*

Tyson, although such a fight would prove virtually nothing, while the risks this time could be even more than a chunk of cartilage.

You didn't look like "The Real Deal" when you struggled to get past Vaughn Bean in September '98. You looked even worse when you somehow got a gift draw in your first bout with Lewis. You improved upon that performance in the rematch, but you still fell short despite trying to steal rounds with timely spurts. Then came the Ruiz fight, your fourth straight disappointing outing. Your record stands at a still magnificent 37-4-1 (25), but the 1-1-1 mark you've posted in your last three fights could easily be 0-3.

It all seems like one senseless card game with virtually no end in sight. If it is a gambler that you've yearned to become, then you should consider the universal handbook, written by a famous country singer.

Any great gambler knows a thing or two about momentum. He can sense when the luck is turning and the tide is shifting heavily in his face. He knows when to cash in his chips and get out while the going is still good.

The foolish gamblers, however, lock onto a blind belief that they'll somehow win it all back, that they'll be able to fight through the current that is charging so sternly against them. The foolish gambler is never satisfied with what he has amassed. The loot before him seems like it is just never enough.

Your recent victory over Ruiz—as disputed as it was—graced you with an unprecedented fourth heavyweight championship. If Jack Nicholson were ringside, watching a nearly 38-year-old prize fighter on the decline, he'd have surely told you that "this is as good as it gets."

And Evander, it ain't gonna get any better.

You are still far ahead in this game. Your Hall of Fame legend is still intact, your glorified image remains afloat, and your health report remains in one piece. You have enough money, possessions, and loved ones to keep you happy for a very, very long time.

But the momentum is beginning to plummet. Your stock is dropping, and dropping fast. And it seems like this time, the momentum is irreversible.

Listen to what 9,000 fans were whispering moments after your escaped with a razor-thin victory over an obscure brawler from Boston whom you would have discarded inside three rounds just a few years ago. And listen to the advice Kenny Rogers once gave for when the pot begins to wane.

It may not only be time to walk away from this game, Evander. Judging by what we saw in your struggles with John Ruiz, it may very well be time to run. ■

***Signs of Holyfield's recent decline could be seen as early as two years ago, when he struggled to capture a decision over mandatory challenger Vaughn Bean in his hometown of Atlanta.***

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★ "Sugar" Shane Mosley
★ Willie Pep
★ "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler
★ Ken Norton
★ Virgil Hill
★ David Reid
★ Michael Carbajal
★ Kid Gavilan
★ Bernard Hopkins
★ Floyd Patterson
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# WORLDWIDE RATINGS

**The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were complied as of August 2000, the WBC as of August 2000, and the IBF as of July 2000.**

| HEAVYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Lennox Lewis (GB)** | **C** | **–** | **C** |
| **Evander Holyfield (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **2** |
| David Tua (NZ) | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Mike Tyson (USA) | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| Wladimir Klitchko (UKR) | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| Larry Donald (USA) | 4 | 8 | 3 |
| Kirk Johnson (CAN) | 5 | – | – |
| Oleg Maskaev (UKR) | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| Henry Akinwande (GB) | 7 | 10 | – |
| Andrew Golota (POL) | 8 | – | – |
| Clifford Etienne (USA) | 9 | – | – |
| Oliver McCall (USA) | 10 | – | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | – |
| John Ruiz (USA) | – | 5 | 5 |
| Vitaly Klitschko (UKR) | – | 7 | – |
| Kirk Johnson (CAN) | – | 9 | 10 |
| Danell Nicholson (USA) | – | – | 4 |
| Michael Grant (USA) | 11 | – | 6 |

| CRUISERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| James Toney (USA) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Marcelo Dominguez (ARG) | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Wayne Braithwaite (GUY) | 3 | – | 11 |
| Alex Gonzalez (PR) | 4 | 10 | – |
| Torsten May (GER) | 5 | 9 | 2 |
| Louis Azille (DR) | 6 | – | 9 |
| Carl Thompson (GB) | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| Ezra Sellars (USA) | 8 | – | 8 |
| Arthur Williams (USA) | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| Adam Watt (AUSTRL) | 10 | – | – |
| Virgil Hill (USA) | – | 1 | 12 |
| Alexander Gurov (UKR) | – | 3 | – |
| Saul Montana (MEX) | – | 5 | 7 |
| Valery Vikhor (LAT) | – | 8 | – |
| Alex Gonzales (USA) | – | – | 1 |
| Andre Purlette (GUY) | – | – | 10 |

| LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Roy Jones (USA)** | **C** | **C** | **C** |
| Michael Nunn (USA) | 1 | – | – |
| Clinton Woods (GB) | 2 | 9 | 6 |
| Eric Harding (USA) | 3 | 7 | 1 |
| Reggie Johnson (USA) | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Yawe Davis (ITA) | 5 | – | – |
| David Telesco (USA) | 6 | 4 | 12 |
| Thomas Ulrich (GER) | 7 | – | – |
| Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL) | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| Derrick Harmon (USA) | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| Jean-Marc Mormerck (FRA) | 10 | – | – |
| Lou Del Valle (USA) | – | 1 | – |
| Frank Liles (USA) | – | 2 | – |
| Richard Hall (USA) | 16 | 6 | – |
| Billy Lewis (USA) | – | 10 | 4 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Antonio Tarver (USA) | 13 | – | 5 |
| Lincoln Carter (USA) | 11 | – | 7 |
| Will Taylor (USA) | – | – | 9 |

| SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Glenn Catley (GB)** | **C** | **–** | **10** |
| **Bruno Girard (FRA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Sven Ottke (GER)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Eric Lucas (CAN) | 1 | – | – |
| Markus Beyer (GER) | 2 | – | – |
| Mario Velt (GER) | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Richie Woodhall (GB) | 4 | 7 | – |
| Andrei Shkalikov (RUS) | 5 | 1 | – |
| Dana Rosenblatt (USA) | 6 | 2 | – |
| Stephane Ouellet (CAN) | 7 | – | – |
| Guy Waters (AUSTRL) | 8 | – | 6 |
| David Starie (GB) | 9 | 12 | – |
| Byron Mitchell (USA) | 10 | 4 | – |
| Charles Brewer (USA) | – | 5 | 1 |
| Manuel Siacca (PR) | – | 6 | – |
| Fredric Alvarez (SWE) | 15 | 8 | 5 |
| Mads Larsen (DEN) | 11 | 9 | – |
| Mike Makata (NZ) | – | 10 | – |
| James Butler (USA) | 19 | – | 2 |
| Thomas Tate (USA) | 14 | 11 | 3 |
| Syd Vanderpool (CAN) | – | – | 7 |
| Guillermo Jones (PAN) | – | – | 8 |
| Willie McIntyre (USA) | 18 | – | 9 |

| MIDDLEWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Keith Holmes (USA)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **William Joppy (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Bernard Hopkins (USA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Erland Betare (FRA) | 1 | – | – |
| David Reid (USA) | 2 | 2 | – |
| Hassine Cherifi (FRA) | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| Howard Eastman (GB) | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| Robert McCracken (GB) | 5 | – | – |
| Ali Ennebati (FRA) | 6 | – | 10 |
| Kevin Palmer (USA) | 7 | – | – |
| Davide Ciarlante (ITA) | 8 | – | – |
| Davey Hilton (CAN) | 9 | 9 | 5 |
| Antwun Echols (USA) | 10 | 5 | – |
| Guillermo Jones (PAN) | 11 | 3 | – |
| Julio Cesar Green (DR) | – | 6 | – |
| Darren Obah (AUSTRL) | – | 7 | – |
| Rito Ruvalcaba (MEX) | – | 8 | – |
| Lonnie Bradley (USA) | 17 | 10 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 1 |
| Antwun Echols (USA) | – | – | 2 |
| Brian Barbosa (USA) | 12 | – | 3 |
| Carl Daniels (USA) | – | – | 4 |
| Dana Rosenblatt (USA) | – | – | 7 |
| Santiago Samaniego (PAN) | – | – | 8 |

| JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Francisco Castillejo (SPA)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Felix Trinidad (PR)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Fernando Vargas (USA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Roman Karmazin (RUS) | 1 | 6 | – |
| Alfred Ankamah (GHA) | 2 | – | – |
| Winky Wright (USA) | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Carl Daniels (USA) | 4 | 3 | – |
| Quirino Garcia (MEX) | 5 | – | – |
| Tony Marshall (USA) | 6 | – | – |
| Kevin Kelly (USA) | 7 | 7 | – |
| Bronco McKart (USA) | 8 | – | 4 |
| Derrell Coley (USA) | 9 | – | – |
| Akira Ohigashi (JAP) | 10 | 12 | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | – |
| Jose Flores (MEX) | 14 | 2 | 5 |
| Ike Quartey (GHA) | – | 5 | 10 |
| Julio Cesar Vazquez (ARG) | – | 8 | – |
| Mamadou Thiam (FRA) | – | 9 | 6 |
| Ricardo Mayorga (NIC) | 29 | 10 | – |
| Ross Thompson (USA) | – | – | 1 |
| Robert Frazier (USA) | – | – | 2 |
| Emmett Linton (USA) | – | 11 | 7 |
| Pedro Ortega (MEX) | – | – | 8 |
| Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL) | – | – | 9 |

| WELTERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Shane Mosley (USA)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **James Page (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Vacant** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Oscar De La Hoya (USA) | 1 | 2 | – |
| Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL) | 2 | 7 | 4 |
| Ike Quartey (GHA) | 3 | – | – |
| Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX) | 4 | – | – |
| Alessandro Duran (ITA) | 5 | 10 | – |
| Jose Luis Cruz (MEX) | 6 | – | – |
| Kofi Jantuah (GHA) | 7 | – | 10 |
| Nicolas Cervera (COL) | 8 | – | – |
| Carlos Baldomir (ARG) | 9 | 9 | – |
| Oba Carr (USA) | 10 | 6 | 3 |
| Andrew Lewis (GUY) | 18 | 1 | 8 |
| Michael Trabant (GERE) | 20 | 3 | – |
| Arturo Gatti (USA) | – | 4 | – |
| Thomas Damgaard (DEN) | 12 | 5 | – |
| Frank Olsen (DEN) | 11 | 8 | 5 |
| Raul Frank (USA) | – | – | 1 |
| Vernon Forrest (USA) | – | – | 2 |
| Scott Dixon (GB) | 14 | – | 6 |
| Andrew Murray (USA) | – | – | 7 |
| Hercules Kyvelos (CAN) | 23 | – | 9 |

| JR. WELTERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Sharmba Mitchell (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Zab Judah (USA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Oktay Urkal (TUR) | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Hector Camacho Jr (PR) | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Diobelis Hurtado (CUB) | 3 | 2 | – |
| Arturo Gatti (CAN) | 4 | – | – |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gianluca Branco (ITA) | 5 | – | – |
| Ricky Quiles (USA) | 6 | – | – |
| Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS) | 7 | – | – |
| Vince Phillips (USA) | 8 | – | – |
| Ray Oliveira (USA) | 9 | – | 8 |
| Ben Tackie (GHA) | 10 | 12 | – |
| Antonio Diaz (USA) | 15 | 4 | – |
| Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX) | – | 5 | – |
| Khalid Rahilou (FRA) | – | 6 | – |
| Giuseppi Laury (ITA) | – | 7 | – |
| Felix Flores (USA) | – | 8 | – |
| Ajib Albarado (IND) | – | 9 | – |
| John-John Molina (PR) | – | 10 | – |
| Terronn Millett (USA) | – | – | 1 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Allan Vester (DEN) | – | – | 3 |
| George Scott (SWE) | 23 | – | 5 |
| Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA) | 11 | 11 | 7 |
| Teddy Reid (USA) | 22 | – | 9 |
| Reggie Green (USA) | – | – | 10 |

| LIGHTWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Paul Spadafora (USA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Cesar Bazan (MEX) | 1 | – | 3 |
| Lawrence Ngobeni (SA) | 2 | – | – |
| Steve Johnston (USA) | 3 | – | – |
| Rick Yoshimura (JAP) | 4 | 4 | – |
| Julien Lorcy (FRA) | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Bruno Wartelle (FRA) | 6 | – | – |
| Billy Schwer (GB) | 7 | – | – |
| Lovemore Ndou (SA) | 8 | – | 7 |
| James Leija (USA) | 9 | – | 8 |
| Alberto Sicurella (ARG) | 10 | 3 | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | – |
| Gilbert Serrano (VEN) | – | 5 | – |
| Stefano Zoff (ITA) | – | 6 | – |
| Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA) | 15 | 7 | – |
| Raul Balbi (ARG) | – | 8 | – |
| Oscar Garcia Cano (SPA) | 12 | 9 | – |
| Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA) | 20 | 10 | 11 |
| Billy Irwin (CAN) | 17 | – | 1 |
| Joel Perez (USA) | – | – | 2 |
| Angel Manfredy (USA) | – | 11 | 4 |
| Wilfrido Ruiz (USA) | – | – | 6 |
| Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR) | 14 | – | 9 |
| Mike Griffith (USA) | – | – | 10 |

| JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Floyd Mayweather (USA)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Joel Casamayor (CUB)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Diego Corrales (USA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Jesus Chavez (USA) | 1 | – | 9 |
| Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI) | 2 | – | – |
| Kengo Nagashima (JAP) | 3 | – | – |
| Boris Sinitsin (RUS) | 4 | 6 | – |
| Tiger Ari (PHIL) | 5 | – | – |
| Goyo Vargas (MEX) | 6 | – | – |
| Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV) | 7 | – | – |
| Tontcho Tontchev (BUL) | 8 | 4 | – |
| Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX) | 9 | – | – |
| Dennis Holbaek (DEN) | 10 | – | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | 2 |
| Lakva Sim (MON) | – | 2 | – |
| Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI) | – | 3 | – |
| Jongkwon Baek (KOR) | 13 | 5 | – |
| Luis Navarro (USA) | 18 | 7 | 10 |
| Radford Beasley (USA) | – | 8 | – |
| Steve Forbes (USA) | 25 | 9 | 5 |
| Juan Lazcano (USA) | – | 10 | – |
| John Brown (USA) | – | – | 1 |
| Derrick Gainer (USA) | – | – | 3 |
| Carlos Hernandez (USA) | – | – | 4 |
| Santos Rebolledo (VEN) | – | – | 6 |
| Robbie Peden (AUSTRL) | – | – | 7 |
| David Santos (USA) | – | – | 8 |

| FEATHERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Guty Espadas (MEX)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Fred Norwood (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Paul Ingle (GB)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Injin Chi (KOR) | 1 | – | – |
| Tony Wehbee (AUS) | 2 | – | 7 |
| Istvan Kovacs (HUN) | 3 | 8 | – |
| Luisito Espinosa (PHIL) | 4 | – | – |
| Raul Perez (MEX) | 5 | – | – |
| Kevin Kelley (USA) | 6 | 10 | 5 |
| Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX) | 7 | – | – |
| Philip Ndou (SA) | 8 | 7 | – |
| Pablo Chacon (ARG) | 9 | 3 | – |
| Edgar Barcenas (MEX) | 10 | – | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | – |
| Victor Polo (COL) | – | 2 | 4 |
| Derrick Gainer (USA) | 14 | 4 | – |
| Angel Vasquez (PR) | 24 | 5 | 3 |
| Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX) | 13 | 6 | – |
| Nana Konadu (GHA) | – | 9 | – |
| Manuel Medina (MEX) | 21 | – | 1 |
| Mbulelo Botile (SA) | – | – | 2 |
| David Toledo (USA) | – | – | 6 |
| Oscar Larios (MEX) | – | – | 8 |
| Frankie Toledo (USA) | – | – | 9 |
| Carlos Navarro (USA) | – | – | 10 |

| JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Erik Morales (MEX)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Clarence Adams (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Michael Brodie (GB) | 1 | 7 | 2 |
| Willie Jorrin (USA) | 2 | 12 | 4 |
| Oscar Larios (MEX) | 3 | – | – |
| Sergei Devakov (UKR) | 4 | – | 3 |
| Wayne McCullough (IRE) | 5 | – | 8 |
| Manny Pacquaio (PHIL) | 6 | – | 5 |
| Cesar Soto (MEX) | 7 | – | – |
| Enrique Sanchez (MEX) | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| Israel Vazquez (MEX) | 9 | – | 7 |
| Yongjin Cho (KOR) | 10 | – | – |
| Antonio Cermeno (VEN) | – | 1 | – |
| Yobert Ortega (VEN) | 18 | 2 | – |
| Bugiarso (INDO) | – | 3 | – |
| Nestor Garza (MEX) | – | 4 | – |
| Vladislav Antonov (RUS) | 20 | 5 | – |
| Jose Rojas (VEN) | 26 | 6 | – |
| Osamu Sato (JAP) | – | 9 | – |
| Kozo Ishii (JAP) | 15 | 10 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 1 |
| Hector Julia Avila (DR) | 12 | – | 9 |
| Agapito Sanchez (DR) | 13 | – | 10 |

| BANTAMWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Paul Ayala (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Tim Austin (USA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX) | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Jess Maca (PHIL) | 2 | – | – |
| Adan Vargas (MEX) | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| Ricardo Barajas (MEX) | 4 | – | – |
| Hugo Dianzo (MEX) | 5 | – | – |
| Rafael Marquez (MEX) | 6 | 8 | 9 |
| Gerardo Martinez (MEX) | 7 | – | – |
| Alejandro Estrada (MEX) | 8 | – | – |
| Jorge Lacierva (MEX) | 9 | – | – |
| Francisco Mateos (MEX) | 10 | – | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | – |
| Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI) | – | 2 | – |
| Danny Romero (USA) | – | 3 | 4 |
| Fernando Montiel (MEX) | – | 5 | – |
| Johnny Bredahl (DEN) | – | 7 | – |
| Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP) | – | 9 | – |
| Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL) | – | 10 | – |
| Jesus Perez (COL) | 23 | – | 1 |
| Arthur Johnson (USA) | – | – | 2 |
| Pete Frissina (USA) | – | – | 5 |
| Dario Azuaga (PAR) | – | – | 7 |
| Paul Lloyd (GB) | – | – | 8 |
| Steve Dotse (GHA) | – | – | 10 |

| JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **In Joo Cho (KOR)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Hideki Todaka (JAP)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Vacant** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Gerry Penalosa (PHIL) | 1 | – | – |
| Heriberto Ruiz (MEX) | 2 | – | 7 |
| Dimitri Kirilov (RUS) | 3 | – | – |
| Masanori Tokuyama (JAP) | 4 | – | – |
| Seungrok Choi (KOR) | 5 | – | – |
| Fernando Montiel (MEX) | 6 | – | – |
| Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP) | 7 | – | – |
| Trinidad Mendoza (MEX) | 8 | – | – |
| Akihigo Nago (JAP) | 9 | 6 | – |
| Reynaldo Hurtado (COL) | 10 | – | – |
| Leo Gamez (VEN) | – | 1 | – |
| Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI) | – | 2 | 3 |
| Jesus Rojas (VEN) | – | 3 | 5 |
| Edison Torres (VEN) | – | 4 | – |
| Jesper Jensen (DEN) | – | 5 | – |
| Yokthai Sithoar (THAI) | – | 7 | – |
| Joel Luna Zarate (MEX) | – | 8 | 4 |
| Lester Fuentes (NIC) | 22 | 9 | – |
| Luis Bolanos (COL) | – | 10 | 8 |
| Julio Gamboa (NIC) | – | – | 1 |
| Felix Machado (VEN) | – | – | 2 |
| Vernie Torres (USA) | – | – | 6 |
| Everardo Morales (MEX) | – | – | 9 |
| Antonio Gonzales (MEX) | – | – | 10 |

| FLYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Eric Morel (USA)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Irene Pacheco (COL)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Chatchai Sasakul (THAI) | 1 | – | – |
| Alex Ali Baba (GHA) | 2 | – | – |
| Medgoen Singsurat (THAI) | 3 | – | – |
| David Guerault (FRA) | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Gabriel Mira (MEX) | 5 | – | – |
| Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI) | 6 | – | – |
| Hiroshi Nakano (JAP) | 7 | – | – |
| Alejandro Montiel (MEX) | 8 | 10 | 4 |
| Everardo Morales (MEX) | 9 | – | – |
| Celes Kobayashi (JAP) | 10 | – | – |
| Jose Bonilla (VEN) | – | 1 | – |
| Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI) | 29 | 2 | – |
| Panieng Okuda (THAI) | – | 3 | – |
| Sornpichai Kratchingdaeng (THAI) | – | 4 | – |
| Mike Trejo (USA) | – | 6 | 3 |
| Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN) | – | 7 | – |
| Mzukisi Sikali (SA) | – | 8 | – |
| Jose Lopez (VEN) | – | 9 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Pedro Pena (USA) | – | – | 5 |
| Zoltan Lunka (TUR) | 18 | – | 6 |
| Jose Lagos (ARG) | – | – | 7 |
| Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN) | – | – | 8 |
| Jose Landin (USA) | – | – | 9 |
| Edicson Torres (PAN) | – | – | 10 |

| JR. FLYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Yosam Choi (KOR)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Bebis Mendoza (COL)** | **–** | **C** | **7** |
| **Ricardo Lopez (MEX)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Jorge Arce (MEX) | 1 | 6 | 10 |
| Saman Sorjaturong (THAI) | 2 | 8 | – |
| Hidenobu Honda (JAP) | 3 | 2 | – |
| Panieng Sasiprabha (THAI) | 4 | – | – |
| Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI) | 5 | – | – |
| Takayuki Korogi (JAP) | 6 | – | – |
| Eric Ortiz (MEX) | 7 | – | – |
| Juanito Rubillar (PHIL) | 8 | – | – |
| Kohki Tanaka (JAP) | 9 | 11 | – |
| Melchor Cob Castro (MEX) | 10 | – | – |
| Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI) | – | 1 | – |
| Yura Dimas (MON) | 19 | 3 | – |
| Rosendo Alvarez (NIC) | – | 4 | – |
| Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI) | – | 5 | – |
| Masibulele Makepula (SA) | – | 7 | – |
| Gilberto Keb Baas (MEX) | – | 9 | – |
| Nelson Dieppa (DR) | – | 10 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 1 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI) | 23 | – | 3 |
| Everardo Morales (MEX) | – | – | 4 |
| Pongsaklek Sithkanongsak (THAI) | – | – | 5 |
| Alex Sanchez (PR) | – | – | 6 |
| Will Grigsby (USA) | – | – | 8 |
| Domingo Guillen (DR) | – | – | 9 |

| STRAWWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)** | **C** | **–** | **–** |
| **Joma Gamboa (PHIL)** | **–** | **C** | **–** |
| **Zolani Petelo (SA)** | **–** | **–** | **C** |
| Daniel Reyes (COL) | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Erdene Chuluun (MON) | 2 | – | – |
| Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI) | 3 | – | – |
| Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP) | 4 | – | 9 |
| Juan Keb Baas (MEX) | 5 | – | – |
| Makoto Suzuki (JAP) | 6 | 11 | – |
| Jaewon Kim (KOR) | 7 | – | – |
| Keitaro Hoshino (JAP) | 8 | – | – |
| Manny Melchor (PHIL) | 9 | – | – |
| Andy Tabanas (PHIL) | 10 | 12 | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | 2 |
| Chana Porpaoin (THAI) | – | 2 | – |
| Jose Garcia (COL) | – | 4 | – |
| Udomdet Porpaoin (THAI) | – | 5 | – |
| Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP) | 16 | 6 | – |
| Noel Arumbulet (VEN) | – | 7 | – |
| Songkram Porpaoin (THAI) | – | 8 | – |
| Satoru Abe (JAP) | 17 | 9 | – |
| Fasan Pongsawan (THAI) | – | 10 | – |
| Rocky Palma (JAP) | – | – | 3 |
| Faisol Akbar (INDO) | – | – | 4 |
| Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP) | – | – | 5 |
| Rocky Lim (TWN) | – | – | 6 |
| Alberto Rossel (PERU) | – | – | 7 |
| Juan Herrera (COL) | – | – | 8 |
| Jose Ferreyra (ARG) | – | – | 10 |

CLASSIC

From THE RING, December 1984

# BARRY McGUIGAN KEEPS THOSE IRISH EYES SMILING

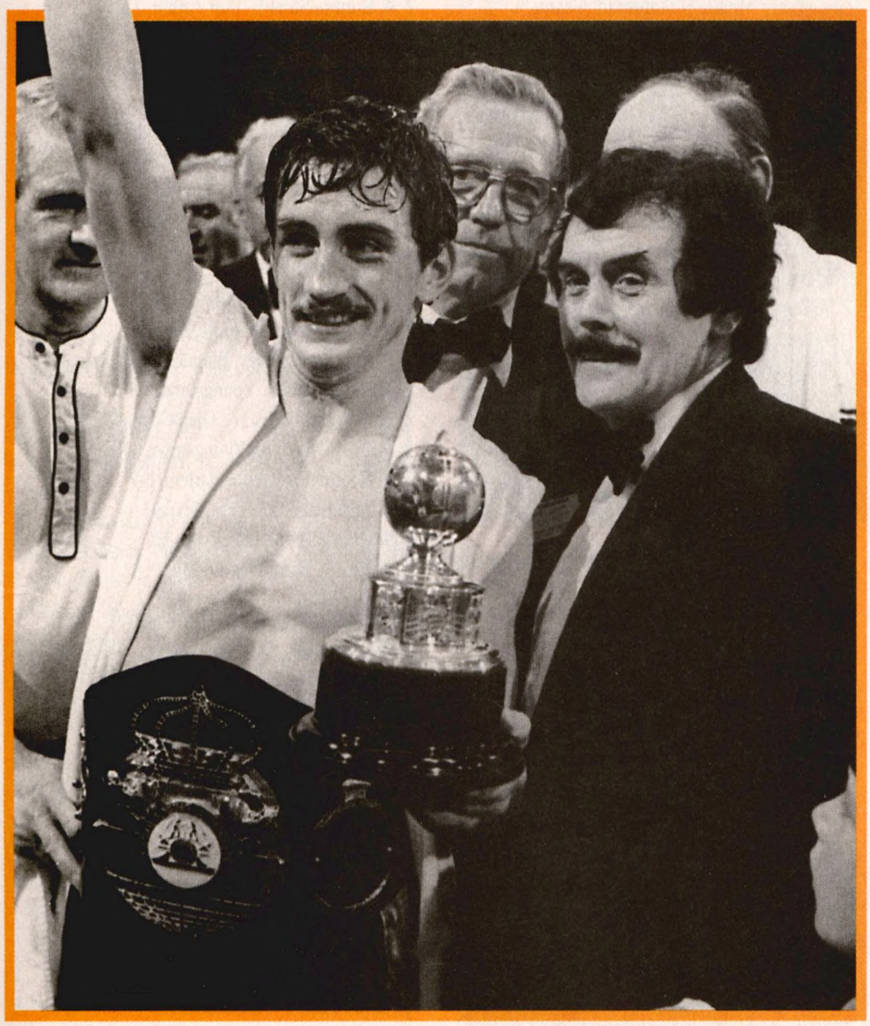
**By George Kimball**

"They have a saying in Belfast these days," says Barry McGuigan: "'Leave the fightin' to McGuigan.'"

And on the nights "Young Barry" displays his wares at Belfast's King's Hall, they generally do. Diehard Unionists from the city's hard-line Shankill Road district sit side-by-side with fervent Republicans from the South cheering McGuigan with a single-minded devotion. In a country where people can sit inside a pub and

*Barry McGuigan was the pride of Ireland, causing warring factions to come together every time "The Clones Cyclone" fought at Belfast's King's Hall.*

# He's Nothing Less Than The World's Most Exciting Featherweight



*McGuigan, shown here with his father, Pat, lived in County Monoghan, or "Bandit Country," as the locals called it. McGuigan could have claimed Northern Irish or British nationality.*

argue about whether it is raining outside or not (those espousing the former position would usually be right) there is unanimity on at least one subject. Over the length and breadth of the frequently strife-torn island, I have yet to meet a man who had one bad word to say about the 23-year-old featherweight.

An American-born country-and-western singer called "Big Tom" has a hit single on the Irish charts: "Barry McGuigan, The Clones Cyclone." (People dance to it.) And on fight nights, the specter of McGuigan even entering the ring at King's Hall sets off a din that would frighten a banshee. When McGuigan met American Paul DeVorce there earlier this summer in a bout televised back to the States, CBS' Gil Glancy stood in the center of the uproar that greeted McGuigan's entrance and, looking a bit like General Custer just before the denouement, gravely but nervously intoned, "I've never heard anything like this. And I'll tell you something else: Paul DeVorce has never heard anything like this either."

"The support for me there is really tremendous," concedes McGuigan of his home-court advantage. "I realize that a good fighter should be able to fight anywhere, but if it were left to me I'd rather fight nowhere else."

In the Belfast building, the ancient animosities are laid to rest, and those representing both sides of the Irish question close ranks behind him, each thinking of him as their own. And, in a very real sense, they are both correct.

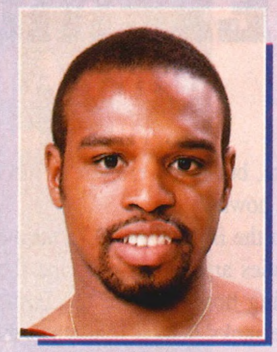
Although McGuigan has lately been fighting exclusively out of Belfast, he is a native-born son of Clones, in the Irish Republic, where he still lives. Clones is in County Monoghan, "Bandit Country," in the parlance of the local constabulary. Monoghan is one of three counties in the province of Ulster that remained within the Republic when the country was partitioned over 60 years ago, and is today a base for frequent IRA incursions over the border to the British-ruled North.

At the same time, since both his grandparents and father Pat were born in County Tyrone, Barry can claim Northern Irish—and, hence, British—nationality. At various times in his boxing career he has represented all three entities.

He took up the sport at 12, and within two years was training so earnestly that he abandoned earlier plans to become a teacher, opting instead to box full-time. "Because of the nature of my mother's business [Mrs. McGuigan is a greengrocer in Clones; Pat is a member of a traditional Irish band called "The Big Four" that is frequently on tour], I could work and still train three times a day. I've been training as a professional, you might say, since I was 14 years of age."

He won the all-Ireland bantamweight junior title at 15, and a year later captured the national junior and senior crowns. The same year, representing Northern Ireland, he was the youngest gold medal winner at the Edmonton Commonwealth Games. In the 1980 Olympics, he fought for Ireland, but was eliminated in the quarterfinals. ("I'd broken a rib and couldn't spar; I was just too stale. It was very disappointing. I made a fool of myself in the quarters and

# THE RING RATINGS, December 1984



*Rocky Lockridge*

**HEAVYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Larry Holmes**, Easton, PA
1. **Pinklon Thomas**, Wyncotte, PA
2. **Gerrie Coetzee**, South Africa
3. **Tim Witherspoon**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Michael Dokes**, Akron, OH
5. **Mike Weaver**, Diamond Bar, CA
6. **David Bey**, Pittsburgh, PA
7. **Greg Page**, Louisville, KY
8. **Trevor Berbick**, Canada
9. **James Smith**, Magnolia, NC
10. **James Broad**, Wildwood, NJ

**CRUISERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Carlos DeLeon**, Puerto Rico
1. **Osvaldo Ocasio**, Puerto Rico
2. **Anthony Davis**, Las Vegas, NV
3. **John Odhiambo**, Uganda
4. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, Brooklyn, NY
5. **B.T. Gordon**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Alfonso Ratliff**, Chicago, IL
7. **Henry Hearns**, Los Angeles, CA
8. **Leroy Murphy**, Missoula, MT
9. **Marvin Camel**, Chicago, IL
10. **Randy Stephens**, Dallas, TX

**LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Michael Spinks**, St. Louis, MO
1. **Dwight Qawi**, Camden, NJ
2. **Eddie Davis**, Freeport, NY
3. **Marvin Johnson**, Indianapolis, IN
4. **Willie Edwards**, Detroit, MI
5. **Oscar Rivadeneyra**, Vineland, NJ
6. **Pete McIntyre**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Jean-Marie Emebe**, Cameroon
8. **Richie Kates**, Bridgeton, NJ
9. **Fulgencio Obelmejias**, Venezuela
10. **Prince Mama Mohammad**, Ghana

**MIDDLEWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Marvin Hagler**, Brockton, MA
1. **Mustafa Hamsho**, Syria
2. **James Shuler**, Philadelphia, PA
3. **James Kinchen**, San Diego, CA
4. **Don Lee**, Gary, IN
5. **Juan D. Roldan**, Argentina
6. **Dwight Davison**, Detroit, MI
7. **Tony Sibson**, England
8. **Alex Ramos**, Bronx, NY
9. **Curtis Parker**, Philadelphia, PA
10. **Herol Graham**, England

**JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
1. **Mike McCallum**, New York, NY
2. **John Mugabi**, Uganda
3. **Mark Medal**, Jersey City, NJ
4. **Davey Moore**, Bronx, NY
5. **David Braxton**, Detroit, MI
6. **Fred Hutchings**, Stockton, CA
7. **Earl Hargrove**, Philadelphia, PA
8. **Julian Jackson**, Virgin Islands
9. **Buster Drayton**, Philadelphia, PA
10. **James Green**, Irvington, NJ

**WELTERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Vacant**
1. **Milton McCrory**, Detroit, MI
2. **Colin Jones**, Wales
3. **Tommy Ayers**, Cincinnati, OH
4. **Nino LaRocca**, Italy
5. **Simon Brown**, Washington, D.C.
6. **Maurice Blocker**, Washington, D.C.
7. **Pedro Vilella**, New York, NY
8. **Marlon Starling**, Hartford, CT
9. **Carlos Trujillo**, Panama
10. **Roger Stafford**, Philadelphia, PA

**JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Vacant**
1. **Aaron Pryor**, Cincinnati, OH
2. **Billy Costello**, Kingston, NY
3. **Gene Hatcher**, Fort Worth, TX
4. **Ronnie Shields**, Port Arthur, TX
5. **Leroy Haley**, Las Vegas, NV
6. **Saoul Mamby**, New York, NY
7. **Patrizio Oliva**, Italy
8. **Gary Hinton**, Philadelphia, PA
9. **Hugo Hernandez**, Argentina
10. **Clint McKenzie**, England

**LIGHTWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Vacant**
1. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
2. **Livingstone Bramble**, Passaic, NJ
3. **Tyrone Crawley**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Ray Mancini**, Youngstown, OH
5. **Howard Davis Jr.**, Glen Cove, NY
6. **Harry Arroyo**, Youngstown, OH
7. **Hector Camacho**, Harlem, NY
8. **Jose Luis Ramirez**, Mexico
9. **Robin Blake**, Levelland, TX
10. **Jimmy Paul**, Detroit, MI

**JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Rocky Lockridge**, Maple Shade, NJ
1. **Mario Martinez**, Mexico
2. **Roger Mayweather**, Las Vegas, NV
3. **Julio Cesar Chavez**, Mexico
4. **Rafael Solis**, Puerto Rico
5. **Bobby Chacon**, Oroville, CA
6. **Edgar Castro**, Venezuela
7. **Vonekura Ikhoni**, Japan
8. **Pat Cowdell**, England
9. **Jean Marc Renard**, Belgium
10. **Kamel Bou Ali**, Tunisia

**FEATHERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Eusebio Pedroza**, Panama
1. **Wilfredo Gomez**, Puerto Rico
2. **Juan LaPorte**, Puerto Rico
3. **Barry McGuigan**, Ireland
4. **Azumah Nelson**, Ghana
5. **Marcos Villasana**, Mexico

was beaten by an African, who in turn lost to the eventual gold medalist in Moscow.")

Turning professional shortly thereafter, McGuigan took advantage of his dual citizenship and obtained a British passport in November of 1982. Five months later he won the British featherweight title, knocking out Vernon Pemprose in two rounds at Belfast's Ulster Hall, and three fights after that, he captured the European crown by kayoing Italy's Valerio Nati in six.

His 21-1 record (with 20 knockouts) has gotten him to the number-five spot on the WBC's list of contenders, while the WBA ranks him seventh. (THE RING currently rates him fourth). At 5'7"-plus, McGuigan is big, almost strapping for a featherweight, with his 40-inch chest and 70-inch reach, but insists that he has no problem with the 126-pound weight. WBA champ Eusebio Pedroza, McGuigan points out, is 5'10". *(Editor's note: Pedroza is 5'9".)*

He has studied films of both Pedroza and WBC feather king Wilfredo Gomez (Barry collects fight films with the same fervor he bestows on his other passion; he is a connoisseur of fine teas), and is looking for a meeting with one or the other

6. **Johnny De La Rosa**, Miami, FL
7. **Jackie Beard**, Detroit, MI
8. **Bernard Taylor**, Knoxville, TN
9. **Ruben Castillo**, Bakersfield, CA
10. **Richard Savage**, W. Monroe, LA

### JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

**World Champ: Vacant**

1. **Jaime Garza**, Los Angeles, CA
2. **Victor Callejas**, Puerto Rico
3. **Mike Ayala**, San Antonio, TX
4. **Loris Stecca**, Italy
5. **Felepe Orozco**, Colombia
6. **Juan "Kid" Meza**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Julian Solis**, Puerto Rico
8. **Leo Cruz**, Dominican Republic
9. **Raul Gonzalez**, Venezuela
10. **Seung-Hoon Lee**, Korea

### BANTAMWEIGHTS

**World Champ: Richard Sandoval,** Los Angeles, CA

1. **Albert Davila**, Pomona, CA
2. **Jeff Chandler**, Philadelphia, PA
3. **Jiro Watanabe**, Japan
4. **Enrique Sanchez**, Dominican Republic
5. **Oscar Muniz**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Payao Poontarat**, Thailand
7. **Edgar Roman**, Venezuela
8. **Gaby Canizales**, Laredo, TX
9. **Rafael Orono**, Venezuela
10. **Freddie Jackson**, Houston, TX

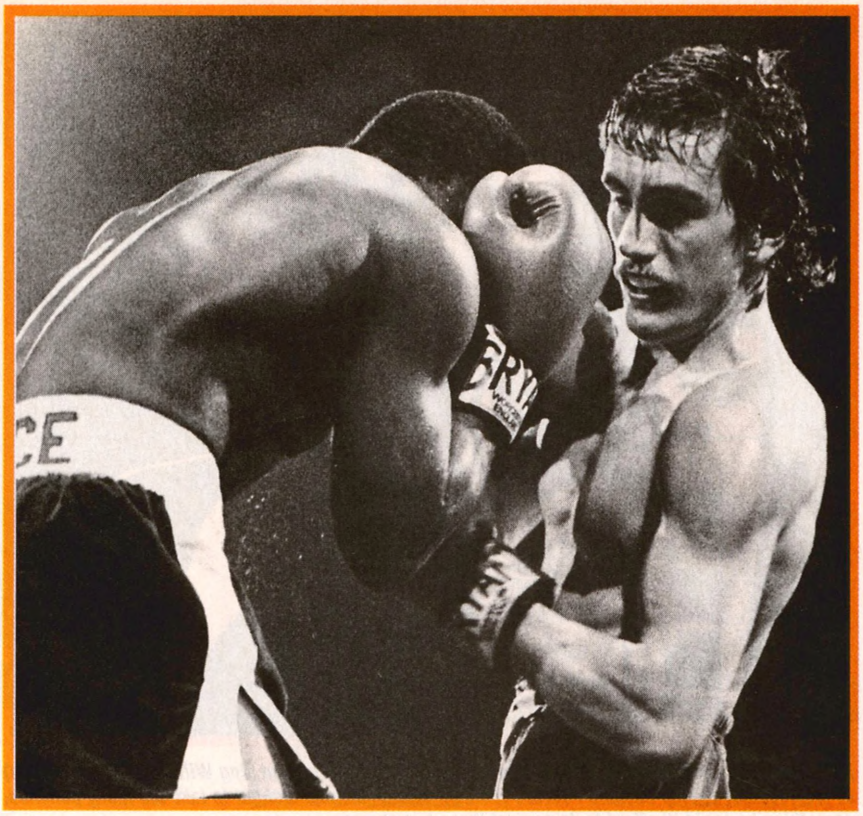
### FLYWEIGHTS

**World Champ: Gabriel Bernal**, Mexico

1. **Santos Laciar**, Argentina
2. **Jung-Koo Chang**, Korea
3. **Francisco Quiroz**, Dominican Republic
4. **Freddie Castillo**, Mexico
5. **Lupe Madera**, Mexico
6. **Koji Kobayashi**, Japan
7. **Prudencio Cardona**, Colombia
8. **German Torres**, Mexico
9. **Candido Tellez**, Mexico
10. **Juan Herrera**, Mexico

("whichever title is available," he shrugs) within his next two fights. "Please, God," he adds hopefully.

He had hoped that his next step would be a challenge to Azumah Nelson for the Commonwealth title, but that move was sidetracked when Nelson opted for a WBC title shot with Gomez. At the moment, manager Barry Eastwood is arranging a defense of either the British or the

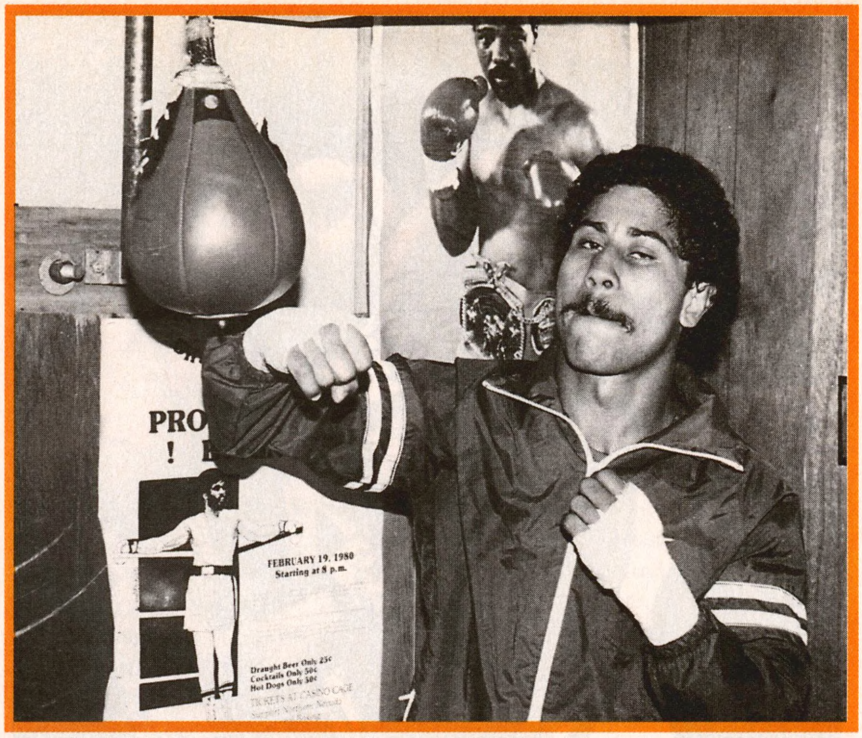


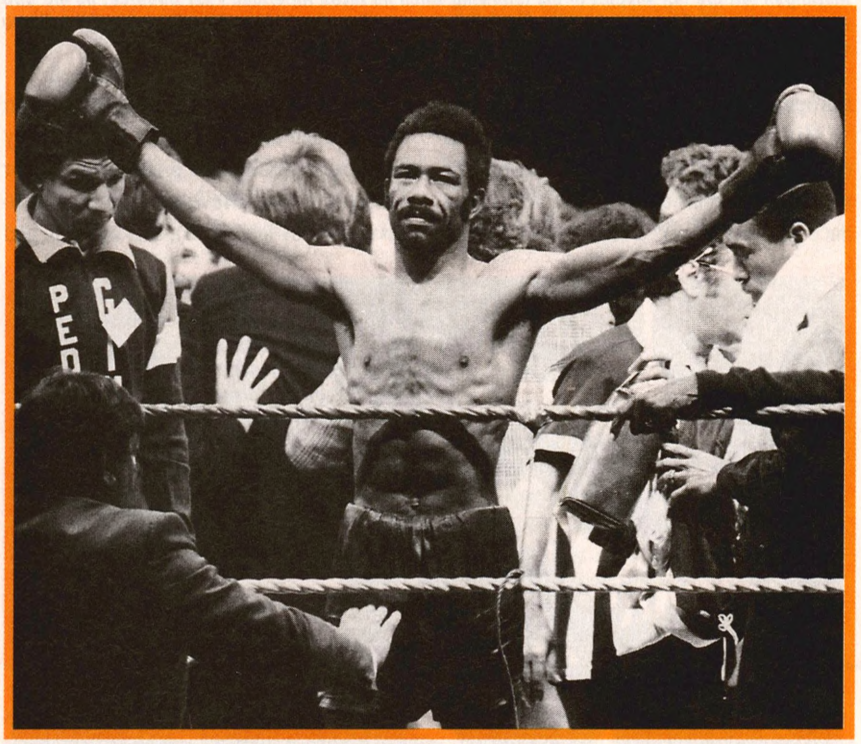
*McGuigan felt the full support of his following when he faced American Paul DeVorce, as did CBS commentator Gil Clancy, who remarked, "I've never heard anything like this. And I'll tell you something else: Paul DeVorce has never heard anything like this either."*

European crown for McGuigan in Belfast.

His impressive knockout record had earned him considerable attention on this side of the Atlantic (his lone live appearance in America was a relatively well-kept secret; he knocked out Lovan McGowan in one round on a Cedric Kushner/Mickey Duff card at Chicago's DaVinci Manor before a crowd McGuigan estimates to have been at least 150), but since it had

*McGuigan built an impressive record, though mostly through suspect opponents. The Clones Cyclone validated his claim as one of the best featherweights in the world with a seventh-round TKO over veteran Jose Caba.*



***McGuigan was seeking a title shot against either WBC featherweight king Wilfredo Gomez (above) or WBA feather champ Eusebio Pedroza (below). McGuigan was thought to take too many punches, something he could ill afford to do against those two champs.***

been largely accomplished at the expense of European suspects, some skepticism remained.

That was ended in April of this year when McGuigan mixed it up with the veteran Jose Caba and came away with a one-sided seventh-round TKO. Caba had fought the best, and the only man who had stopped him prior to McGuigan had been the redoubtable Danny "Little Red" Lopez ("And," fight buff McGuigan points out proudly, "Caba had Lopez all over the place early in that one.")

The win over Caba set the stage for the DeVorce bout and McGuigan's American television debut. Although he won with a fifth-round TKO, the reaction here was decidedly mixed. McGuigan had the fight well in hand, but DeVorce had mounted his own best attack in the fourth, which made it all the more startling when British referee Sid Nathan abruptly waded in and stopped the bout a round later. As the King's Hall crowd collapsed about the ring in a frenzied bedlam, Clancy, aghast, nearly choked on his microphone. The premature conclusion at the same time caused some to wonder how many of McGuigan's non-CBS knockouts might have been similarly rendered.

"I think the referee done me a major injustice by stopping that one," said McGuigan. "I'd have ended it myself if he'd given me half a minute more, because he was really badly hurt. [DeVorce] told me later that his whole right side was broken up with the bodyshots I'd been giving him."

The other criticism of the fight stemmed from the fact that McGuigan appeared to get hit a good deal more than would have seemed prudent. And while DeVorce couldn't hurt him, given the same opportunities, a Wilfredo Gomez, Pedroza, or even a Juan LaPorte surely wouldn't allow McGuigan to escape so easily.

"I did get hit more than usual," concedes McGuigan, "but that was because I was makin' all the fightin'. I firmly believe in applying different tactics to each opponent, and DeVorce is a cute sort of fighter. I was doing all the pressing, and it's very difficult not to get hit. I wouldn't fight Gomez or Pedroza that way. In fact, I didn't fight Caba that way. He commits himself and takes chances, so I just got on me bicycle and it paid off. I nearly had him out when they stopped it in the seventh round."

He rated Caba his own best fight to date, and the Zambian Charm Chituli his most difficult, but he cannot erase the memory of a bout in London 2½ years ago—"and I won't, as long as I live." Like Ray Mancini and Lupe Pintor and Emile Griffith, Barry McGuigan is haunted by the awesome recollection of having killed a man in the ring.

On the 15th of June in 1982, McGuigan was matched with a Nigerian named Mohammed Aleemy, who fought under the *nom de guerre* of Young Ali. In

*McGuigan had a hard time dealing with the death of Nigerian Mohammad Aleemy, who fought as Young Ali. McGuigan knocked out Aleemy with a right hand in the sixth round of a June 1982 bout and sent him into a coma from which he never recovered.*

their bout at the World Sporting Club, recalls Barry, "he was very lively and in the fight for the first two rounds, but then I started to slow him down with bodyshots. When he came out in the fifth, I took a bit of a rest, still protecting myself, of course, and then in the sixth round I caught him in a corner and threw a hard right over the top. I hit him right between the eyes, and he just fell there."

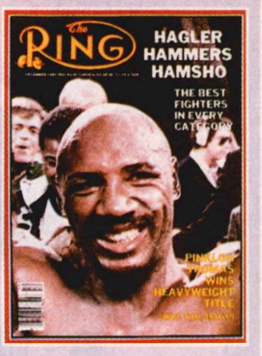
Young Ali never got up. He went into a coma, in which he lingered until he died the following December without ever regaining consciousness. McGuigan was so shaken by the experience that he nearly abandoned the sport he holds so dear.

"It was all so sad." Tears well up in his eyes at the memory. "He was only a young lad, 21 years of age like myself, and he'd left a pregnant wife in Nigeria to come to London and earn money for his family. My own wife was pregnant by the time he died. To happen so far away from home, and he never even got to see his child."

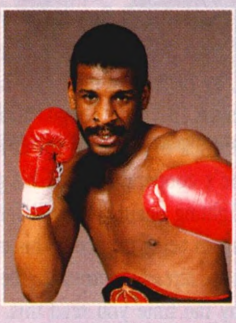
Barry's wife, Sandra, gave birth to his son, Bain, in August 1983. It was only after considerable soul-searching and consultation with Sandra and with his priest that he returned to boxing. "I always pray for him, and I'll never forget him. I'm fighting for him as well as myself now."

And, of course, for Ireland. McGuigan recognizes—and welcomes—the fact that he has become a symbol of hope for Irishmen on both sides of the border. He is a Catholic from the South (Sandra is a Protestant) and still the darling of Protestant Belfast. "We're well-accepted in both communities," says McGuigan. "I firmly believe that 90 percent of the people on both sides want only peace, and that's what I'm fighting for, too. There's never been a time like this before. If they'd only leave the fightin' to McGuigan." ■

# THE RING, December 1984

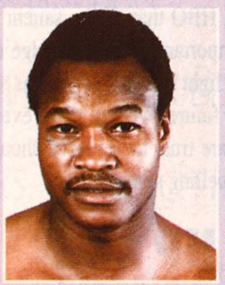



***The Cover:*** The talk among some boxing experts was that Marvelous Marvin Hagler was slipping, but Hagler went out and proved them wrong by knocking out Mustafa Hamsho in three rounds. Hagler, however, was stripped of the WBC middleweight title when he scheduled the fight for 15 rounds, instead of conforming to the new WBC-recognized 12-round distance.



***Who's The Best?:*** THE RING editors created a list of who was the best in several specific areas of boxing. Michael Spinks was the only fighter who garnered the top spot in two categories, as he was selected as having both the best uppercut and the best left hook.

***Heavy Broad:*** James Broad was looking for a world title shot after kayoing previously unbeaten Eddie Gregg for the NABF heavyweight crown. The 24-year-old Broad weighed in at a less-than-svelte 246 pounds.



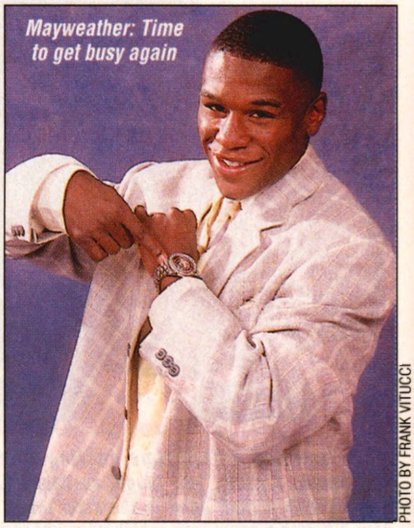
***Holming In On A Record:*** Larry Holmes was about to make his first defense of the IBF heavyweight title against James "Bonecrusher" Smith, and take another step toward closing in on the 49-bout win streak that Rocky Marciano established during his career.

***Fighter Of The Month:*** Pinklon Thomas captured the WBC heavyweight title with a 12-round majority decision over Tim Witherspoon. Thomas used a consistent jab to wear down the lethargic Witherspoon, who lost the title in his first defense and claimed afterward he was thumbed by Thomas throughout the fight.

# LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

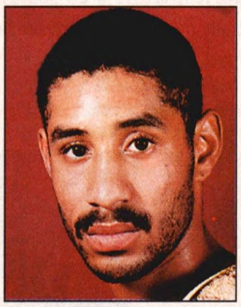
## MAYWEATHER CORRALLED



Mayweather: Time to get busy again

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

**Floyd Mayweather** is all of 23 years old, and already he's slipping. Maybe not in terms of skill or athleticism or potential to dominate the sport. But in terms of status, it hasn't been looking so pretty for "Pretty Boy" of late. Ranked as high as number two pound-for-pound by THE RING several months ago, Mayweather has now dipped to number seven, simply by doing nothing. He's not even ranked first in his weight class anymore. But if all goes according to plan, Mayweather will get a chance next spring to get right back on top, by facing the man who has replaced him as the number one junior lightweight, IBF titlist **Diego "Chico" Corrales**.



Corrales: Legal hurdle looms large

Mayweather is back in the good (or at least adequate) graces of HBO, he's cooperating with his promoter, Top Rank, and he's fighting again. The WBC 130-pound champ, who is once again being trained by his uncle, **Roger Mayweather**, will have already returned to the ring on a *KO Nation* broadcast by the time you read this. The plan from there is to co-headline a show with Corrales in January, which in turn will set up a megafight between the two undefeated champions in the spring.

"I just need a couple of tuneup fights and get ready for Diego," Mayweather told **David Mayo** of his hometown *Grand Rapids Press*. "I just need a lot of boxing to get me sharp."

No doubt Mayweather will need to be sharp to handle Corrales, given the way Chico dismantled **Angel Manfredy** last time out. Unfortunately, there is a major obstacle to this tantalizing matchup happening: Corrales' legal complications. He is accused of severely beating his pregnant wife in July, and with an October preliminary hearing pending as we went to press, the future for Corrales is unclear, to say the least.

"Chico said on HBO that all the salient facts have not been presented by either side," said Corrales' manager, **Barrett Silver**, "and it's important not to pre-judge until they have been presented. Could this potentially be an obstacle? Certainly. We're not making light of it. It's a serious situation. But you must go forward with your life, and that means making plans for Chico's boxing future. We will make every effort to make sure this fight with Floyd happens."

If the charges are true, then justice should be served. But if Corrales is not proven guilty, it's boxing fans who will be served a truly compelling superfight.

## LISTEN UP

Just when you thought the pitiful super middleweight division was about to drift off into complete obscurity, something worthwhile is finally happening: unification. If negotiations go as expected, we'll have one less fighter to have to call "champ" after December 3, the date on which IBF 168-pound titlist **Sven Ottke** and new WBC king **Dingaan Thobela** are slated to meet. It looked as of press time like the bout would be in Germany (Ottke's homeland), but South Africa (Thobela's turf) was also a possibility ... Believe it or not, welterweight contender **Arturo Gatti** needed only five stitches to initially sew up the hideous gash he picked up in his September fight with **Joe Hutchinson**, but it was decided soon thereafter that plastic surgery would have to follow. That means "Thunder" won't return to the ring before the end of 2000, thus eliminating his hopes for a December clash with **Shane Mosley**. But Gatti still may get his title shot early in the new year, against either **Kostya Tszyu** at 140 pounds, or against **Andrew "Six Heads" Lewis** for the WBA welter title if **James Page** is stripped ... There's a potential cracker on the **Lennox Lewis-David Tua** undercard, with hardened, exciting veterans **Jesse James Leija** and **Ivan Robinson** meeting in a pick-'em 10-rounder. Main Events matchmaker **Carl Moretti** described the implications of the fight as "loser's gotta get out" ... On the British end of the Lewis-Tua pay-per-view broadcast, IBF featherweight champ **Paul Ingle** defends against his mandatory challenger, former bantamweight titlist **Mbulelo Botile**, in England ... **Vinny Pazienza** isn't done yet. The popular New Englander wants to reach 50 wins before retiring—he's currently at 46—and he's looking to get back in the ring and shoot for number 47 in December or January. Paz is hoping that one of his remaining fights will be a rubber match with **Dana Rosenblatt**. ■

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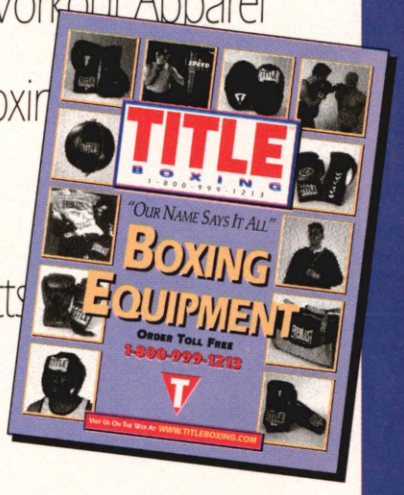


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